

A Translation for Translators

of

The New Testament

A source text for translators

Ellis W. Deibler, Jr.

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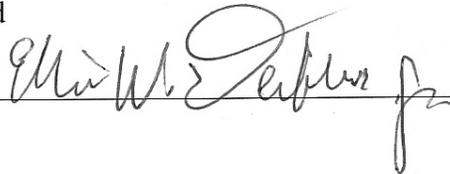
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PREFACE

In 1999, the International Conference of Wycliffe Bible Translators adopted a proposal called Vision 2025. The leaders of Wycliffe Bible Translators wanted to revitalize our concern for the worldwide task of Bible translation. The proposal stated our goal: to begin a Bible translation project in every language in which it is needed by the year 2025. That is a very ambitious goal. It seems an impossible goal. Yet we believe God would have us strive to reach this goal, for His glory. We believe that too many language groups—approximately 2,600 of them—have waited far too long to know of God's redeeming grace revealed through his word.

As an organization, we have realized that to reach this goal we need to be doing things differently. We realize that nationals of the countries in which these Bible-less groups are located will probably do most of the actual translation work. Many of those nationals will be translating into their own languages.

As a translation consultant, I concluded that the best thing that I could do to bring about the fulfillment of Vision 2025 would be to prepare a new translation of the Scriptures specifically for translators. Existing English translations were not intended to be used as a source text by those who would be translating it into other languages. It is our hope that **A Translation for Translators** will provide information that a translator needs but which is not included in standard versions.

Its distinguishing features are:

- Short sentences
- Clear connections between clauses and sentences
- Sometimes clause order is reversed to reflect more clearly the chronological or logical order
- All abstract nouns are made into full clauses
- Most passive constructions have an active form and a passive form supplied
- Most rhetorical questions have both a question form and a non-question form supplied
- All figures of speech that we have been able to identify are stated non figuratively
- Simple vocabulary is used wherever possible
- Words are always used in their primary sense
- The implicit information that is deemed necessary to understand what the original writer intended to convey is supplied in italics. Users can identify it easily and decide after checking whether it is needed in that receptor language.

Most national translators who use this translation as the major source text will need to be trained how to use it. They will need to learn to evaluate the adjustments in this translation to determine what is the most appropriate adjustment for their own language.

I have based this translation on the scholarship of the Semantic and Structural Analyses and other published helps for translators, such as Exegetical Summaries, as well as the English versions and commentaries. I do not anticipate that a translator would use only this translation. Translators should use other translations as sources alongside this one.

Advantages to using this translation:

- The implicit information, written in italics, is easily seen. Translators could choose to use it, modify it, or reject it as unnecessary.
- In this day and age we have available a tremendous amount of research as to the meaning that the original writers expected to convey to their audiences. Most of this research is not readily available to national translators. This translation utilizes that research and it provides the first step in translation—analyzing the meaning.

I have prepared this translation with the hope that it can either be used as it is, or be translated, with appropriate adjustments, into other languages of wider communication. Translation teams in Guatemala, India, Indonesia and the Philippines have already used drafts of this translation. Efforts are already underway to translate it into Portuguese and Spanish.

Please note that there is no implied endorsement of this translation by the Translation Department, either of the Summer Institute of Linguistics or of the Wycliffe Bible Translators or of any other publisher.

I offer this translation, hoping that the translators who use it will be enabled to complete their work in a much shorter time. I also hope that by using this translation, their work will be of a far better quality.

Ellis W. Deibler, Jr.
January 2008
Waxhaw, North Carolina

We will appreciate your comments and suggestions.

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AFFIRMATION

We affirm that:

- The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and are the only infallible rule of faith and practice.
- The Scriptures were originally written in the language of the common people. They were written with the expectation that the recipients could and would understand the meaning clearly.
- Every person needs to have the Scriptures in the language he or she knows best.
- Every language has its own set of grammatical and lexical forms and structures that can be used to convey meaning. But every language has forms and structures that are different from every other language—just like every language has a set of sounds used in it that are different from those of every other language. So we should never expect that the forms used in one language—be it Biblical Hebrew or Greek or any other language—will be suitable to convey a certain message, in whole and in part, in another language.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS TRANSLATION

Ellis W. Deibler, Jr. joined Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics in 1957. He has completed translation projects in the Alekano and Yaweyuha languages in Papua New Guinea. Several years later he did a complete revision of the Alekano New Testament. He has checked Bible translations, lectured and taught on principles of translation, and led translation workshops in nineteen countries, mostly in the South Pacific, Central Asia, and South Asia. He has written several books and published many articles dealing with Bible translation. He is now retired and living in Waxhaw, North Carolina.

ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Martha Deibler checked the translation for clearness, ambiguities, correct exegesis, and implicit information. Martha joined Wycliffe Bible Translators in 1967 and co-translated the New Testament in Cakchiquel in Guatemala and supervised the translation projects in two more dialects of the same language. She has served for more than thirty years as a Translation Consultant.

Willis Ott developed the format of the document and advised on many exegetical and translational problems. He and his wife joined the Summer Institute of Linguistics in 1954 and completed a translation project for the Ignaciano people of Bolivia. He has served as a translation consultant in Bolivia, Botswana, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), Peru, Mozambique and Sudan. He retired after 44 years of service with the Summer Institute of Linguistics and is now living in Waxhaw, North Carolina.

Andrew Sims is the project manager for this series, in charge of distribution, and keeping records of what books, in what form, are sent to whom and when. Andrew and his wife joined Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics in 1973. They completed a translation project in a language in the Eastern Highlands of Irian (Indonesia) in 1996. He has served as a translation consultant in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. He lives in Waxhaw, North Carolina.

Donna Fedukowski has helped check the some of the implicit information. Gail Morse, Linda Boehm, Martha Deibler, Joyce Gullman, Janice Roddy, Linda Jonson, Susan Hochstetler, and several members of the Christian Reformed Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan, have edited the copy for errors and clarity.

NOTE ON SPELLINGS

We beg those who are accustomed to British spellings to overlook the American way of spelling. Aside from these normal differences, please advise us of any kind of typographical errors. We would also appreciate feedback concerning exegetical matters.

CONCERNING THE THEME STATEMENTS

In this translation, the theme statements precede each paragraph. They summarize the thematic content of that paragraph, reflecting the most prominent ideas in that paragraph. The translator should use the theme statements to make sure that the reader understands the most important parts of that paragraph. For example, a translator could rephrase the theme statement as a question to ask during a comprehension check. If the reader/listener has clearly understood the essential focus of the passage, he should be able to make an equivalent theme statement.

Example: **A Translation for Translators** has the following theme statement for Mark 2:1-12: *“By healing a paralyzed man Jesus demonstrated his authority to forgive sins as well as to heal.”* Compare this theme statement with the section heading in the New Living Translation “Jesus heals a paralyzed man” or in the Jerusalem Bible “Cure of a paralytic”.

The theme statements in this translation are not the same as the section headings that are included in most translations today.

Section headings in most translations often include more than one paragraph. They focus on a word, person or event mentioned in the section. These usually do not reflect the thematic focus of the section. It is my hope that the theme statements will help translators to write clear and accurate headings in the translation. But some may want to write theme statements similar to those in this translation instead of short heading that most translations use.

Translators who want to include section headings should carefully consider what to write in such headings. They should also consider where they want section headings to occur. Although there is a theme statement for every paragraph in this translation, a translator must choose where to include a section heading. For example, in **A Translation for Translators**, the letter to Philemon has nine theme statements. A translator may choose to have fewer section headings. If a translator includes several paragraphs in a section, the heading he writes should reflect the themes of those paragraphs.

A translator will also need to decide how to present the section heading. In some English translations, section headings are not complete sentences. The translator should present the section headings in the grammatical form that the speakers of the language prefer.

Observe that the theme statements do not necessarily use the simplified language that is found in the translation.

EXPLANATION OF THE FORMAT OF THIS TRANSLATION

John 1:1-18

Scripture reference

Theme statement

THEME: *This book is about Jesus, who was eternally with God but also became a human being to reveal God to mankind.*

¹The one who expresses [MET] *◀God's character/what God is like▶* has always existed *◀from the beginning [MTY] of everything/before everything began▶*. He has always existed with God, and he had **God's nature**. ²He always existed with God *before* he began [MTY] *to create anything*. ³He was the one by whom God caused everything to exist. He was the one who created absolutely everything. ⁴He is the one who *caused everything* to live. He, who caused us people to live, *revealed to us the truth about God, as a light [MET] reveals what is in the darkness*. ⁵People do not want him to reveal *that what they do is evil [MET] like darkness is evil*. But *just like* darkness cannot put out light [MET], *evil people have never prevented the one who was like a light from revealing God's truth*. (OR, evil people have never understood the *one who was like a light*).

The beginning of an alternative translation is identified by a ◀.

The ending of an alternative translation is identified by a ▶.

Alternative interpretations are given in parentheses and introduced by "OR".

Romans 12:1-2

THEME: *I appeal to you that you present yourselves to God by making yourselves like living sacrifices, which is the appropriate way to serve him. Do not let anything non-Christian determine how you act, but instead let God change your way of thinking.*

12 ¹My fellow believers, since God has acted mercifully *toward you* in so many ways, I appeal to *all of you* that you present yourselves [SYN] *to him by making yourselves like* holy sacrifices [MET]. *Make yourselves sacrifices* that he is pleased with, sacrifices that are living/alive, *not ones that are dead/killed*. *Since God has done so much for you/us*, this is the *only* appropriate way to serve him. ²Do not let anything non-Christian determine how you should act. Instead, let God change your *way of life* by making your way of thinking new, in order that you may know what he wants you to do. That is, you will know what is good, and you will know what pleases *God*, and you will know how to be all that he wants you to be.

Implicit information is italicized.

The short alternatives with one word are separated by a slash, but they do not have beginning and ending markers.

Matthew 3:7-10

THEME: *John told the Pharisees and Sadducees that they needed to repent before he would baptize them.*

We have suggested two alternative ways for translating the passive constructions in the Greek text. The first suggestion states a passive concept while the second suggestion states the concept as an active construction.

⁷After John noted that many men of the Pharisee *religious group* and of the Sadducee *religious group* were coming to him to be baptized (in order that he would baptize them), ~~he said to them, "You people are evil like poisonous snakes [MET]! I warn you that God will some day punish [MTY] everyone who sins. ◀And do not think that you can escape from his punishing you [MTY] if you do not turn from your sinful behavior! Did someone tell you that you can escape from his punishing you [MTY] if you do not turn from your sinful behavior?▶~~ [RHQ] ⁸Do what is appropriate [IDI] for people who have truly turned away from their sinful behavior *before you come to me in order to be baptized {that I baptize you}*. ⁹God promised to give Abraham many descendants. *In order to fulfill that promise, God does not need you!* I tell you that he can change these stones to make them descendants of Abraham. So do not start to say to yourselves, 'Since we are descendants of our ancestor Abraham, *God will not punish us even though we have sinned.*' ¹⁰God is ready to punish you if you do not turn away from your sinful behavior, just like a man does who lays his axe at the roots of a fruit tree in order to chop it down and throw it into the fire if it does not produce good fruit [MET]."

The active form of the passive construction is marked at its beginning by an opening curly bracket.

A closing curly bracket marks the end of the active form.

We have usually given two alternative ways to translate rhetorical questions in the original text. If you choose the first alternative and translate it with the rest of the words in that sentence, you will form a sentence that is not a question.

If you choose the second alternative and translate it with the rest of the words in that sentence, you will form a sentence that is a question.

CONVENTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN USED

Sometimes two exegetical alternatives are noted—places where there are differences in meaning that are well supported in commentaries. In such cases the second alternative, in parentheses, is introduced by OR. The author recommends the first alternative.

Example: Sometimes lexical alternatives—where the meaning is perhaps only slightly different or can be expressed in a clearer way—are given and separated by a slash line. We have tried to indicate the beginning of an alternative by a “<” and the ending of each alternative by a “>”.

For each rhetorical question there is given, usually first, a rendering in a non-question form, and then one using a question form.

All first person plural pronouns are to be considered inclusive unless otherwise marked by (*exc*). All second person pronouns are to be considered plural unless otherwise marked as (*sg*).

In this translation, we have indicated the agent of the action wherever a passive construction occurs. We have written in italics the words “by_____” to indicate the agent, if it is implicit. Translators who choose to use a passive construction in their translation will need to use their natural idiom and translate a reference to the agent in those places they consider it useful.

We have identified the different figures of speech where each occurs in the text, but these symbols are hidden in the data-file.

[APO] = apostrophe

[MET] = metaphor

[CHI] = chiasmus

[MTY] = metonymy

[DOU] = doublet

[PRS] = personification

[EUP] = euphemism

[RHQ] = rhetorical question

[HEN] = hendiadys

[SIM] = simile

[HYP] = hyperbole

[SYM] = symbol

[IDM] = idiom

[SAR] = sarcasm

[IRO] = irony

[SYN] = synecdoche

[LIT] = litotes

[TRI] = triplet

USE OF “A TRANSLATION FOR TRANSLATORS”

We anticipate that **A Translation for Translators** will be useful to Mother Tongue Translators, as well as those who are translating in a language that they have learned. We cannot anticipate or calculate how useful it will prove to any given team, but we are certain that it will give much help to many. We also hope that it will prove to be a blessing to many who are not involved in Bible translation.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Ellis W. Deibler, Jr. devoted over eight years to the creation of his own translation of the New Testament from the latest edition of the United Bible Societies' Greek text. This translation was and is intended to be a tool for all translators who labor to bring the gospel message to other languages.

However, a number of his non-translator friends who followed Ellis's progress also came to desire copies of their own. They came to believe that others might get pleasure or benefit from this volume. It is also these others, then, for whom **A Translation for Translators** has been brought into print and made available.

As Ellis neared completion of his master work, he began to see a new audience. There could be many who would not need or want all of the technical details that are important to the translator but who would like to have a companion volume geared to reading, even reading aloud. A companion book, **A Translator's Translation**, was completed and brought to print simultaneously with the first.

A Translator's Translation contains very much the same material found in *A Translation for Translators*. It has the same priorities. However, the technical aids (figures of speech, alternatives, etc.) required by the translator are not present. Only the text and implicit information appear together, in flowing form easily followed by the reader. Implicit material in italics is readily distinguished from the translated text.

The same passage from Romans 6:15-23, taken from each of these works, is printed on the following page to help you appreciate the differences and similarities. Take a few minutes and enjoy and appreciate what you read.

From A Translation for Translators

Romans 6:15-23

THEME: *If someone should conclude that people can sin now because they are not obligated to obey the Mosaic laws, I would say, "Certainly not!" Instead, let your minds compel your bodies to act righteously.*

*I suppose that certain people might think about what I have just said and they might say [RHQ], "You say that the laws God gave Moses did not enable us to stop sinning, but that God is now treating us kindly in ways we do not deserve. <That seems to mean that God permits us to continue sinning./Does that mean that God permits us to continue sinning?> [RHQ]" My reply to that is no, we should certainly not continue sinning! ¹⁶ <I want you to remember this:/Do you not know this?> [RHQ] Slaves have to obey what their masters command [MET] them to do. Similarly, if you present yourselves to someone in order to obey him, you will be **the slaves** [MET] of the person you obey. Similarly, if you have yielded yourselves to do the sinful things you desire, you are slaves of your sinful desires [PRS], and you will be eternally separated from God. If you have yielded yourselves to obey God, you are slaves of God and you need to live righteously. ¹⁷ You were once slaves to your sinful desires. But you began to sincerely obey the new teaching [MET] that you were taught {that people taught you}. I thank God for that. ¹⁸ I also thank God that you have been freed {that he has freed you} from being controlled by a desire to sin and that you have become as though you were slaves [MET] to living righteously [MET]. ¹⁹ I am illustrating what I say by talking about slavery because your human nature prevents you from understanding spiritual truth easily. In the past you willingly did the immoral and unlawful things that your minds compelled your bodies to do [MET], just like slaves do what their masters compel them to do. As a result you did even more unlawful things. Now, you need to willingly allow your minds to compel your bodies to act righteously, [MET] in order that you will behave in a holy/pure way. ²⁰ When you were like slaves because your sinful desires compelled you to do sinful things [MET], you were not concerned about behaving righteously [MET]. ²¹ Nevertheless, doing those things resulted in your being separated from God, so <you did not benefit at all from doing the sinful things that you are now ashamed of./what did you gain from doing the things that you are now ashamed of?> [RHQ] ²² But you have been freed {God has freed you} from letting the desire to sin control you. You have become as though you were [MET] the slaves of God. So now the result is that God has caused you to completely belong to him and, as a result, you will live eternally. ²³ What people receive for sinning is that they are eternally separated from God. That is like wages that people receive. [MET] But what God gives us is a gift. What he gives us is that we live eternally because of our relationship with (OR, because we are united to) Christ Jesus our Lord.*

From A Translator's Translation

Romans 6:15-23

THEME: *If someone should conclude that people can sin now because they are not obligated to obey the Mosaic laws, I would say, "Certainly not!" Instead, let your minds compel your bodies to act righteously.*

¹⁵ *I suppose that certain people might think about what I have just said and they might say, "You say that the laws God gave Moses did not enable us to stop sinning, but that God is now treating us with undeserved kindness. That seems to mean that God permits us to continue sinning." My reply to that is no, we should certainly not continue sinning! ¹⁶ I want you to remember this: Slaves have an obligation to obey whatever their masters command them to do. Similarly, if you present yourselves to someone in order to obey him, you will be **the slaves** of the person you obey. In the same way, if you have yielded yourselves to do the sinful things you desire, you are slaves of your sinful desires, and you will be eternally separated from God. If you have yielded yourselves to obey God, you are slaves of God, and you need to live righteously. ¹⁷ You were once slaves to your sinful desires because you did the sinful things you desired. But you began to sincerely obey the new teaching that you were taught. I thank God for that. ¹⁸ I also thank God that you have been freed from being controlled by a desire to sin, and that you have become as though you were slaves to living righteously. ¹⁹ I am illustrating what I say by talking about slavery because your human nature prevents you from understanding spiritual truth easily. In the past you willingly did the immoral and unlawful things that your minds compelled your bodies to do, just as slaves do what their masters compel them to do. As a result, you did even more unlawful things. Now, you need to willingly allow your minds to compel your bodies to act righteously, in order that you will behave in a holy way. ²⁰ When you were like slaves because your sinful desires compelled you to do sinful things, you were not concerned about behaving righteously. ²¹ Nevertheless, you did not benefit at all from doing those sinful things that you are now ashamed of, because doing those things resulted in your being eternally separated from God. ²² But God has freed you from letting the desire to sin control you. You have become as though you were the slaves of God. So now the result is that God has caused you to completely belong to him and, as a result, you will live eternally. ²³ What people receive for sinning is that they are eternally separated from God. That is like wages that people receive. But what God gives us is a gift. What he gives us is that we live eternally because of our relationship with Christ Jesus our Lord.*

A Translation for Translators

of

The New Testament

The Gospel that was written by Matthew

Matthew 1:1-17

THEME: The genealogy of Jesus, with the names listed in three groups of fourteen generations each.

1 ¹ This is the record of the ancestors of Jesus <Christ/the Messiah>, the descendant of *King David* and of Abraham, from whom all we Jews have descended. ² Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob. Jacob was the father of Judah and Judah's *older and younger* brothers. ³ Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah, and their mother was Tamar. Perez was the father of Hezron. Hezron was the father of Ram. ⁴ Ram was the father of Amminadab. Amminadab was the father of Nahshon. Nahshon was the father of Salmon. ⁵ Salmon and his wife Rahab, a *non-Jewish woman*, were the parents of Boaz. Boaz was the father of Obed. *Obed's mother was Ruth, another non-Jewish woman.* Obed was the father of Jesse. ⁶ Jesse was the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon. *Solomon's mother was previously married to Uriah.* ⁷ Solomon was the father of Rehoboam. Rehoboam was the father of Abijah. Abijah was the father of Asaph. ⁸ Asaph was the father of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram. Jehoram was an ancestor of Uzziah. ⁹ Uzziah was the father of Jotham. Jotham was the father of Ahaz. Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah. ¹⁰ Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh. Manasseh was the father of Amon. Amon was the father of Josiah. ¹¹ Josiah was the grandfather of Jeconiah and Jeconiah's brothers. *They lived* at the time when the *Babylonian army* took the Israelites as captives to the *country of Babylon*.

¹² After the Babylonians took the Israelites to Babylon, Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel. Shealtiel was the grandfather of Zerubbabel. ¹³ Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud. Abiud was the father of Eliakim. ¹⁴ Eliakim was the father of Azor. Azor was the father of Zadok. Zadok was the father of Akim. ¹⁵ Akim was the father of Eliud. Eliud was the father of Eleazar. Eleazar was the father of Matthan. Matthan was the father of Jacob. ¹⁶ Jacob was the father of Joseph. Joseph was Mary's husband, and Mary was Jesus' mother. Jesus is the one who is called {whom we call} the Messiah.

¹⁷ As you can calculate, I have grouped Jesus' ancestors as follows: There was a succession of fourteen of them from the time when Abraham lived to the time when King David lived. There was a succession of fourteen of them from the time when David lived to the time when the Israelites were taken {the Babylonian army took the Israelites} away to Babylon. There was a succession of fourteen of them from the time when the Israelites were taken {the Babylonian army took the Israelites} away to Babylon until the time when the Messiah was born.

Matthew 1:18-25

THEME: When Joseph learned that Mary was pregnant, he decided to divorce her, but an angel told him to take her as his wife because it was the power of the Holy Spirit that had enabled her to be pregnant.

¹⁸ This is the account of what happened just before Jesus Christ was born. Mary, his mother, {had publicly promised Joseph that she would marry him} had been publicly promised to marry Joseph. Before they began to live together [EUP], Mary realized that she was pregnant. *It was the power of the Holy Spirit that had caused her to become pregnant [EUP].* ¹⁹ Joseph, whom people considered to be her husband, was a man who obeyed God's commands. *One of those commands was that men must divorce women who had acted immorally. So when Joseph learned that Mary was pregnant, he assumed that she was pregnant as a result of her acting immorally.* So he decided <to divorce her/to break the engagement>. But because he did not want to shame her publicly, he decided to divorce her privately. ²⁰ While he was seriously considering this, much to his surprise, in a dream he saw an angel whom the Lord sent. The angel said, "Joseph, descendant of *King David*, do not be afraid that you(sg) would be doing wrong if you(sg) would marry Mary. Instead, *begin to treat her* as your wife, because the Holy Spirit, *not a man*, has caused her to be pregnant. ²¹ She will give birth to a son. Since it is he who will cause that his people will be saved from *the guilt* of their having sinned, name *the baby Jesus, which means 'the Lord saves people'.*" ²² All this happened as a result of what the Lord told the prophet *Isaiah to write long ago about what was going to happen.* This is what Isaiah wrote: ²³ "Listen, a virgin will become pregnant and will give birth to a son. They will call him Emmanuel." Emmanuel means 'God is with us.' ²⁴ When Joseph got up from sleep, he did what the angel whom the Lord *had sent* commanded him to do. He *began to live with Mary* as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not have sexual relations with her [EUP] until she had given birth to a son. And Joseph named him Jesus.

Matthew 2:1-12

THEME: After some astrologers saw an unusual star, they traveled westwards to find the place where the infant Jesus was. King Herod helped direct them, but then an angel told them not to go back to King Herod.

2 ¹ Jesus was born in Bethlehem town in Judea province during the time [MTY] that King Herod the Great ruled there. Some time after Jesus was born, some men who studied the stars and who lived in a country east of Judea came to Jerusalem city. ² They asked people, "Where is the one who has been born in order that he might be the king of you Jews?"

We believe that your new king has been born, because we have seen the star that we believe indicated that he has been born. We saw it while we were in our country east of here. So we have come to worship him.”

³When King Herod heard what those men were asking, he became worried that someone else might be proclaimed {people might proclaim someone else} king of the Jews to replace him. Many of the people of Jerusalem city [MTY, HYP] also became worried because they were afraid of what King Herod might do. ⁴Then Herod gathered together all the ruling priests and men who taught the people the Jewish laws and he asked them where the prophets had predicted that the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They said to him, “He will be born in Bethlehem town, here in Judea province, because it was written by the prophet Micah {the prophet Micah wrote} long ago what God said: ⁶“You who live in Bethlehem town [APO], in Judea province, your town is certainly very important [LIT], because a man from your town will become a ruler. He will guide my people who live in Israel.”

⁷Then King Herod secretly summoned those men who studied the stars. He asked them exactly when the star first appeared. By what they told him, he was able to know the approximate age of the baby. ⁸Then he concealed what he really planned to do and said to them, “Go to Bethlehem and inquire thoroughly where the infant is. When you have found him, come back and report to me so that I, myself, can go there and worship him, too.”

⁹After the men heard what the king told them, they went toward Bethlehem town. To their surprise, the star that they had seen while they were in the eastern country went ahead of them again until it stood above the house where the child was.

¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced greatly and followed it. ¹¹They found the house and entered it and saw the child and his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasure boxes [MTY] and they gave gold, costly frankincense, and myrrh to him. ¹²Because God knew that King Herod planned to kill Jesus, in a dream the men who studied the stars were warned {he warned the men who studied the stars} that they should not return to King Herod. So they returned to their country, but instead of traveling back on the same road, they went on a different road.

Matthew 2:13-21

THEME: Following an angel's instructions, Joseph took his family to country of Egypt to escape from Herod.

¹³After the men who studied the stars left Bethlehem, an angel from the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. He said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee into the country of Egypt. Stay there until I tell you (sg) that you should leave, because King Herod is about to send soldiers to look for the child so that they can kill him.” ¹⁴So Joseph got up, he took the child and his mother that night, and they fled into Egypt. ¹⁵They stayed there until King Herod died, and then they left Egypt. By doing that, it was {they} fulfilled what the prophet Hosea wrote, which had been said by the Lord {which the Lord had said},

I have told my son to come out of Egypt.

¹⁶While King Herod was still living, because he realized that he had been tricked by the men who studied the stars {the men who studied the stars had tricked him}, he became furious. Then, assuming that Jesus was still in Bethlehem or the surrounding regions, Herod sent soldiers there to kill all the boy babies two years old and younger. Herod calculated how old the baby was, according to what the men who studied the stars told him about when the star first appeared. ¹⁷Because Bethlehem and Ramah towns were in the area where the descendants of Jacob's wife Rachel lived, when soldiers killed the infant boys, they fulfilled what Jeremiah the prophet wrote,

¹⁸Women in Ramah were weeping and wailing loudly. Women who were the descendants of Rachel, the ancestor of the women there [SYN], were grieving for what happened to their children. Even though people tried to comfort them, they would not be comforted {stop mourning} because their children were dead [EUP].

¹⁹After Herod died and while Joseph and his family were still in Egypt, an angel that the Lord had sent appeared to Joseph in Egypt in a dream. ²⁰He said to Joseph, “Take the child and his mother and go back to the country of Israel to live, because the people who were looking for the child [EUP] in order to kill him have died.” ²¹So Joseph took the child and his mother, and they went back to Israel.

Matthew 2:22-23

THEME: Following an angel's warning, Joseph and his family returned to Nazareth, and thus a prophecy about the Messiah was fulfilled.

²²When Joseph heard that Archelaus now ruled in Judea district instead of his father, King Herod the Great, he was afraid to go there. Because he was warned {God warned Joseph} in a dream that it was still dangerous for them to live in Judea, he and Mary and Jesus went into Galilee District ²³to the town called Nazareth to live there. The result was that what had been said by the ancient prophets {what the ancient prophets had said} about the Messiah, that he would be called {people would call him} a Nazareth-man, was fulfilled {came true}.

Matthew 3:1-6

THEME: John the Baptizer announced the coming of Jesus, and he baptized many people who heard his message.

3 ¹ While Jesus was still in Nazareth town, John, whom the people called the Baptizer, went to a desolate place in Judea district. ² He was preaching to the people who came there. He kept saying, “You need to turn away from your sinful behavior, because God [MET] will soon begin to rule over people, and he will reject you if you do not turn away from your sinful life.” ³ John was the person who fulfilled what was said by Isaiah the prophet {what Isaiah the prophet predicted when he said}, long ago,

In a desolate area people will hear someone {someone will be heard} shouting to the people who pass by,
Prepare yourselves to receive the Lord when he comes!

Make yourselves ready so that you will be prepared when he comes [MET, DOU], just like people straighten out the road for an important official!

⁴ John wore coarse clothing made from camel’s hair. And as the prophet Elijah did long ago, he wore a leather belt around his waist. His food was only grasshoppers and honey that he found in that desolate area. ⁵ People who lived in Jerusalem city [MTY], many [HYP] people who lived in other places in Judea district [MTY], and many [HYP] people who lived in the area around the Jordan River [MTY] came to John to hear him preach. ⁶ After they heard him tell them to turn away from their sinful behavior, they openly confessed their sins, and as a result they were baptized by John {John baptized them} in the Jordan River.

Matthew 3:7-10

THEME: John told the Pharisees and Sadducees that they needed to repent before he would baptize them.

⁷ After John noted that many men of the Pharisee religious group and of the Sadducee religious group were coming to him to be baptized {in order that he would baptize them}, he said to them, “You people are evil like poisonous snakes [MET]! I warn you that God will some day punish [MTY] everyone who sins. <And do not think that you can escape from his punishing you [MTY] if you do not turn from your sinful behavior!/Did someone tell you that you can escape from his punishing you [MTY] if you do not turn from your sinful behavior?> [RHQ] ⁸ Do what is appropriate [IDI] for people who have truly turned away from their sinful behavior before you come to me in order to be baptized {that I baptize you}. ⁹ God promised to give Abraham many descendants. In order to fulfill that promise, God does not need you! I tell you that he can change these stones to make them descendants of Abraham. So do not start to say to yourselves, ‘Since we are descendants of our ancestor Abraham, God will not punish us even though we have sinned.’ ¹⁰ God is ready to punish you if you do not turn away from your sinful behavior, just like a man who lays his axe at the roots of a fruit tree in order to chop it down and throw it into the fire if it does not produce good fruit [MET].”

Matthew 3:11-12

THEME: John said that someone greater than him would soon come who would enable some of the people to change their lives and who would severely punish the others.

¹¹ “As for me, I am not very important, because I baptize you only with water. I baptize you because of your feeling sorry that you have sinned. But someone else will come soon who is very great; he will do powerful deeds (OR, act powerfully). Because he is superior to me, I am not worthy even to do a menial task for him, such as to carry his sandals.

He will put his Holy Spirit within you to truly change the way you live [MET], and he will judge others of you and punish you in the fire in hell. ¹² He is like a farmer who wants to clear away the grain that is on the ground where it has been threshed {they have threshed it}. That farmer uses a huge fork to throw the grain into the air to separate the wheat from the chaff [MET], and then he cleans up the threshing area. Similarly, God will separate righteous people from the evil people like a farmer who gathers the wheat into his storage area, and then God will burn the people who are like chaff with a fire that will never be put out [MET].”

Matthew 3:13-17

THEME: When John baptized Jesus, God showed that Jesus was his Son by sending the Holy Spirit upon him.

¹³ During that time, Jesus went from Galilee District to the Jordan River, where John was. He did that in order to be baptized by John {in order to ask that John would baptize him}. ¹⁴ When Jesus asked John to baptize him, John objected, saying, “I need to be baptized by you {you to baptize me} because you are superior to me. Since you are not a sinner, <you(sg) should not come to me to be baptized by me {to ask that I baptize you(sg)!/why do you come to me to be baptized by me {ask that I baptize you(sg)} [RHQ]?>” ¹⁵ But Jesus said to him, “Baptize me at this time, because in this way we two will do everything that God requires.” Then John consented to baptize him.

¹⁶ After he was baptized {John baptized Jesus}, Jesus immediately came up out of the water. Just then, it was as though the sky was opened {split apart}. Then Jesus saw God’s Spirit coming down upon him. He came in the form of a dove.

¹⁷ Then God [SYN] spoke from heaven, saying, “This is my Son. I love him. I am very pleased with him.”

Matthew 4:1-11

THEME: After Jesus fasted forty days, Satan tempted him in various ways.

4 ¹ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit {God's Spirit led Jesus} into a desolate area to be tempted by the devil {in order that the devil would tempt him}. ² After he did not eat food day and night for forty days, he was hungry. ³ Satan, the tempter, came to him and said, "Because you *claim that you have a relationship with God as a son has with his father* [MET], *prove it* by commanding these stones to become bread *so that you can eat them!*" ⁴ But Jesus said to him, "No! I will not change stones into bread, because it is written *in the Scriptures* {in the Scriptures Moses wrote}, 'Eating food [SYN] sustains people physically, but it does not sustain them spiritually [SYN]. Instead, paying attention to everything that God has spoken to them is what sustains people spiritually.'" ⁵ Then the devil took Jesus to Jerusalem, the city that is dedicated to God. He set him on the highest part of the Temple, ⁶ and said to him, "Because you *claim that you have a relationship with God as a son has with his father, prove it* by jumping down to the ground. You will not be hurt, because it is written in the Scriptures, 'God will command his angels to protect you. They will lift you up in their hands when you are falling, in order that you will not get hurt. You will not even strike your foot on a stone.'" ⁷ But Jesus said, "No! I will not jump down, because in another place in the Scriptures it is written {there are these words that Moses wrote}: 'Do not try to test the Lord your God to see if he will prevent something bad from happening to you when you do something foolish!'" ⁸ Then the devil took him on top of a very high mountain. There he showed him all the nations in the world and the magnificent things in those nations. ⁹ And then he said to him, "I will let you rule all these nations and give you the magnificent things in them if you bow down and worship me." ¹⁰ But Jesus said to him, "No, I will not worship you, Satan, so go away! It is written in the Scriptures, 'It is the Lord your God whom you(pl) must worship, and you(pl) must serve only him!'" ¹¹ Then the devil went away, and right away, angels came to Jesus and took care of him.

Matthew 4:12-17

THEME: Jesus went to Galilee and preached that people needed to repent to belong to the group whom God would consider his people.

¹² While Jesus was in Judea, John the Baptizer's disciples told him that John had been put in prison and kept there {that Herod Antipas had put John the Baptizer in prison and kept him there}. So Jesus returned to Galilee District. While he was in Galilee, he first went to Nazareth town. ¹³ Then he left Nazareth and went to Capernaum city in order to live there. Capernaum is located beside Galilee Lake in the region which was formerly the regions of the tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali. ¹⁴ One reason that he went there was so that these words that were written by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled {so that he might fulfill these words that the prophet Isaiah wrote}:

¹⁵ Zebulon region and Naphtali region are on the road which is near Galilee Lake and on the eastern side of the Jordan River. They are the regions in Galilee District where many non-Jews are living. ¹⁶ Although the people there will be like people who sit in a dark place [MET], they will suddenly perceive clearly a new teaching, as people who have seen a big light shining on them [MET] perceive everything clearly. The people who are located in a dangerous [MET] region will suddenly perceive clearly what God teaches, as people on whom a light shines perceive things clearly [MET, DOU].

¹⁷ From that time, while Jesus was in Capernaum city, he began to preach this to people: "God [MTY/EUP] will very soon begin to rule, and he will judge you when he rules. So you(pl) need to turn from your sinful ways so that God will not punish you."

Matthew 4:18-22

THEME: Jesus summoned four fishermen, who immediately left their work and went with him.

¹⁸ One day while Jesus was walking by Galilee Lake, he saw two men, Simon, who was later called Peter, and Andrew, his younger brother. They were casting their fishing net into the lake because they earned money by catching and selling fish.

¹⁹ He said to them, "Just like you have been gathering fish, come with me and I will teach you how to gather people to become my disciples." [MET] ²⁰ They immediately left the work that they were doing with their fishing nets, and they went with him.

²¹ As the three of them walked on from there, Jesus saw two other men, James, and John, the younger brother of James. They were in their boat with Zebedee, their father, mending their fishing nets. Jesus told them that they should leave their work and go with him. ²² They immediately left their fishing boat and their father, and they went with Jesus.

Matthew 4:23-25

THEME: Jesus taught and healed many people when he was in Galilee District.

²³ Jesus went with those four men throughout all of Galilee District. He was teaching the people in the buildings where we Jews worship God. He was preaching the good message that tells how to become members of the group of people whose lives God rules over. He was also healing all the Galileans who had diseases or who were sick. ²⁴ When people who lived in other parts of Syria District heard [PRS] what he was doing, they brought to him people who suffered from illnesses, people who suffered from many kinds of diseases, people who suffered from severe pains, people who were controlled by demons {whom demons controlled}, people who were epileptics, and people who were paralyzed. And Jesus healed them.

²⁵Then crowds started to go with him. *They were people from Galilee District, <from the Decapolis/from the Ten Towns area>, from Jerusalem city, from other parts of Judea district, and from areas east of the Jordan River.*

Matthew 5:1-12

THEME: *On a hillside, Jesus taught his disciples and others what kind of people God esteems.*

5 ¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a hillside. He sat down *in order to teach* his disciples. They came near to him *to listen to him*. ²Then he began to teach them by saying,
³*God is pleased with people who recognize that they have a spiritual need; he will allow them to be the people whose lives he rules over.*
⁴*God is pleased with people who mourn because they have sinned; they will be encouraged {he will encourage them.}*
⁵*God is pleased with people who are meek; they will inherit the earth that God will recreate.*
⁶*God is pleased with people who sincerely desire to live righteously just like they desire to eat and drink [MET]; they will be enabled {he will enable them} to do all that he desires [MET].*
⁷*God is pleased with people who act mercifully; he will act mercifully to them.*
⁸*God is pleased with people who think only about that which pleases him; some day they will be where God is and will see him.*
⁹*God is pleased with people who help other people to live peacefully; they will be considered to be {he will consider that they are} his children [MET].*
¹⁰*God is pleased with people to whom evil things are done {to whom other people do evil things} because they conducted themselves righteously; he will allow them to be where he rules over people.*
¹¹*God is pleased with you when other people insult you, when other people do evil things to you and when other people say falsely that you are evil because you believe in me. ¹²When that happens, rejoice and be glad [DOU], because God will give you a great reward in heaven. God will think highly of you, just like he thought highly of the prophets whom your ancestors persecuted long ago.*

Matthew 5:13-16

THEME: *Jesus taught that we should live in such a way that other people will see how we live and will praise God.*

¹³**“You are able to influence evil people [MTY] and improve the way they live in order that they do not become more evil, just like salt is able to improve the flavor of food and to preserve it [MET] from spoiling.** Salt that no longer tastes salty cannot become salty again [RHQ]. As a result, that salt becomes useless. It is rejected by people, thrown on the ground, and walked on {People reject it, throw it on the ground and walk on it} [MET]. *Similarly, if the way you live no longer influences people to live in a godly manner, God will reject you.* ¹⁴**You enable evil people [MTY] to perceive God’s truth as a light enables people to perceive what is around them. Just like everyone can see [LIT] the lights of a city on a hill [MET], other people can see what you do.** ¹⁵After people light a lamp, they never put it under a basket. Instead, *they put it on a lampstand in their houses in order that it can shine on everyone there.* ¹⁶*Similarly, you need to do what is right [MET] in such a manner that other people can see the good deeds that you do, and as a result they will praise your Father who is in heaven.*

Matthew 5:17-20

THEME: *Jesus taught that it is important to obey all of God’s commandments.*

¹⁷**“I came to earth, not to annul the laws that God gave Moses or what the prophets [MTY] wrote. Instead, I came to cause to happen what the authors of those books predicted would happen.** So do not think any longer that I have come to earth in order that I might annul what they wrote. ¹⁸Keep this in mind: *Every point of those laws, including those points that seem least important, and even the smallest details of the laws [MTY] will surely be in effect [HYP, LIT] until the heavens and the earth disappear and until all that God told their authors to write happens.* ¹⁹Since *all God’s laws are important*, if anyone disobeys any of those commandments, *even if it would be one of the least important ones*, and if that person teaches people to disobey any of those commandments, it will be said {God will say} that that person is the least important of those in the place where [EUP] God rules. But those who obey those commandments and teach other people to obey them, it will be said {God will say} that they are very important among those that God rules. ²⁰Keep this in mind: *You assume that the Pharisees and the men who teach our laws faithfully obey what God commands.* But if you do not obey those laws better than they obey them, you will by no means enter the place where God [EUP] rules.

Matthew 5:21-26

THEME: *Jesus taught that we should not be angry and that we should quickly settle accounts with those whom we have wronged.*

²¹ “You have heard *your religious teachers* say that it was said {that Moses said} to your ancestors, ‘Do not murder *anyone*.’ This implied that if someone murders *another person*, the judge will condemn that person *and* sentence him to be executed {say that someone must execute him}. ²² But what I say to you is this: *If you are angry with someone, God will judge you. If you say to someone, ‘You are worthless,’ the Jewish Council will judge you. If you say to someone, ‘You are a fool,’ God will throw you into the fires in hell.* ²³ So, when you take your gift *for God* to the altar, if you remember that you have offended someone, ²⁴ leave your gift by the altar, and first go *to the person you have offended*. Tell that person that you are sorry for what you have done, and ask that person to forgive you. Then go back and offer your gift *to God*. ²⁵ Also, when a fellow citizen *takes you to court in order to accuse you*, settle accounts with that person quickly while you are walking with that person on the road. Do that *while there still is time to do so* in order that he will not take you to the judge, *because if the judge favors the person who is accusing you, he will declare that you are guilty and send you to the prison guard, and the prison guard will put you in prison.* ²⁶ Keep this in mind: *If you go to prison, you will never get out because you will never be able to pay all that the judge says that you owe [MET]. And remember also that you ought to settle accounts with God before you die, too.*

Matthew 5:27-30

THEME: *Jesus taught about the way to refuse to sin when we are tempted to do something wrong.*

²⁷ “You have heard *God’s commandment*, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But what I say to you is this: If a man only looks at a woman desiring to have sex with her, *God considers that his thinking about sinning sexually [MET] is sin.* ²⁹ If because of what you see [MTY] you are tempted to sin, *stop looking at those things! Even if you have to gouge out one of your eyes and throw it away [HYP] to avoid sinning, do it!* It is good *that you not sin and as a result go to heaven, even though while you are still here on earth you lack one or both of your eyes.* But it is not good *that you continue to have two eyes and sin and, as a result, God sends your whole body to hell.* ³⁰ If you are tempted to use one of your hands to sin [MTY], *stop using your hand. Even if you have to cut your hand off and throw it away to avoid sinning, do it [HYP]!* It is good *that you do not sin and as a result you go to heaven, even though while you are still here on earth you lack one or both of your hands.* But it is not good *that you sin and, as a result, God sends your whole body to hell.*

Matthew 5:31-32

THEME: *Jesus taught that people should not divorce their spouses.*

³¹ “It is written {Moses wrote}, ‘If a man is divorcing his wife, he should write a document *on which he states that he is divorcing her.*’ ³² But *now listen to what I say to you: A man may divorce his wife only if she has committed adultery, and not for any other reason.* If a man divorces his wife *for any other reason, and he has sex with another woman, he makes his wife become one against whom he has committed adultery, because in God’s estimation she still is his wife.* Also, if a man marries a woman who is divorced {whose husband has divorced her}, *God considers him guilty of committing adultery.*

Matthew 5:33-37

THEME: *Jesus taught that people should not add anything to make their words more credible when they promise to do something.*

³³ “You have also heard *your religious teachers* say that it was written {that Moses wrote} to your ancestors, ‘Make sure that you do what you promised the Lord that you would do!’ [DOU] ³⁴ But *now listen to what I say to you: Never promise to do anything and then ask a superior being to affirm that what you are saying will happen. For example, do not promise that you will give something and then ask spiritual beings in heaven [MTY] to affirm that you will do it, because heaven is where God sits on his throne [MTY] to rule over people.* ³⁵ Also, *do not promise you will give something and then ask spiritual beings on earth [MTY] to affirm that you will do it, because the earth is where God rests his feet [MET]. Also, do not promise that you will do something and ask religious authorities in Jerusalem to affirm that you will do it, because Jerusalem is the city where God, the great King rules.*

³⁶ Also, *do not promise that you will do something and then say that your head should be cut off {someone should cut off your head} if you do not do it.* You are not even able to *change the color of the hair of your head* by making one *black* hair white or one *white* hair black. ³⁷ *If you talk about doing something, just say ‘Yes, I will do it,’ or ‘No, I will not do it.’ If you say anything more than that, it is from Satan, the Evil One.*

Matthew 5:38-42

THEME: *Jesus taught that everyone should be kind to all people, even to people who mistreat us.*

³⁸ “You have heard *your religious teachers* say that *it is written {Moses wrote}, ‘Retaliate like this: If someone damages one of your eyes, someone should damage one of that person’s eyes. If someone damages one of your teeth, someone should damage one of that person’s teeth.’* ³⁹ But *now listen to what I say to you: Do not take revenge for evil deeds done {that other people do} to you.* Instead, if someone *insults you by striking you on one cheek, turn your other cheek toward that*

person *in order that he can strike it also*.⁴⁰ If someone wants to sue you and take your <inner garment/shirt>, give him your <outer garment/coat> also.⁴¹ If a *military authority* compels you to go with him one mile *and carry his gear*, go with him two miles *and carry his gear*.⁴² Also, if someone asks you for *something*, give *him what he is asking for*. If someone requests you to lend him *something*, do not refuse to *lend it to him*.

Matthew 5:43-48

THEME: *Jesus taught that we should love the people whom we would not normally love.*

⁴³“You have heard *your religious teachers say that it is written {that Moses wrote}*, ‘Love the citizens of your country and hate your enemies.’⁴⁴ But *now listen to what I say to you: Love your enemies as well as your friends*, and pray for those who cause you to suffer.⁴⁵ Do that in order to imitate what God, your Father *who is in heaven*, does. He desires that you [MET] *do like he does. He acts kindly to all people. For example, he causes the sun to shine equally on wicked people and on good people, and he sends rain both on righteous people and on unrighteous people.*⁴⁶ If you love *only the people who love you*, <*do not expect God to reward you in heaven!/will God reward you in heaven?*> [RHQ] *This is based on the fact that everyone, even the tax collectors, who you think are very great sinners, love [RHQ] those who love them. If you act like them, <you are not any different from tax collectors!/in what way are you different from tax collectors?> [RHQ]*⁴⁷ If you want God to bless only your friends, <*you are not acting any better than other people!/are you acting any better than other people?> [RHQ]* Even the non-Jews, *who you think sin very much* (OR, *you think are unacceptable to God*), want God to bless their friends [RHQ], *but God does not reward them for that.*⁴⁸ *You need to love those who do not love you, and in that way become perfect as God your Father, who is in heaven, is perfect.*

Matthew 6:1-13

THEME: *Jesus taught how we should give to needy people. He also taught his disciples how to pray.*

6¹“When you do your good deeds, make certain that you do not do them when other people are watching so that they may see you *and think highly of you*. If you *do good deeds merely in order that other people may think highly of you*, God, your Father *who is in heaven*, will not give you any reward.² So, whenever you give something to the poor, do not *announce it as people announce something that they want other people to know about* by playing a *fanfare* on a trumpet [MET]. That is what the hypocrites do <*in the synagogues/in the Jewish meeting places*> and on the main roads in order that people might see *what they do and praise them*. Keep this in mind: *People praise those hypocrites, but that is the only reward they will receive!*³ Instead of *doing as they do*, when you give something to the poor, do not let other people know that you are doing that [MET].⁴ In that way, you will be giving to the poor secretly. *As a result God, your Father who observes you while no one else sees you, will reward you.*

⁵“Also when you pray, do not do what the hypocrites do. They like to stand in the Jewish meeting places and on the corners of the main streets to pray, in order that other people will see them *and think highly of them*. Keep this in mind: *People praise them, but that is the only reward they will get.*⁶ But as for you, when you pray, go into your private room and close the door in order to pray to God, your Father, whom no one can see. He observes you where no one else observes you, and he will reward you.⁷ When you pray, do not repeat words many times as the people who do not know God do *when they pray. They repeat meaningless words* because they think that if they use many words, their gods will listen to them and give them *what they ask for.*⁸ Do not *repeat words* as they do, because God your Father knows what you need before you ask him.⁹ So pray *things* like this: Father, *you who are in heaven, we(exc) desire that you be honored/revered {that people honor/revere you}*.¹⁰ *We(exc) desire that people let you rule over their lives. We(exc) want people who live on the earth to do what you desire, as those who live in heaven do what you want them to do.*¹¹ Give us(exc) each day the food [SYN] that we(exc) *need for that day.*¹² Forgive our sins just like **we(exc)** have forgiven the people who sin against us(exc).¹³ Do not let us(exc) do wrong things when we(exc) are tempted {someone or something tempts us}, and rescue us(exc) when *Satan* the evil one tempts us to do evil things.^a

Matthew 6:14-15

THEME: *Jesus taught more about forgiving others.*

¹⁴“*Forgive the people who sin against you*, because, if you forgive other people, God, your Father *who is in heaven*, will forgive your sins.¹⁵ But if you do not forgive other people, neither will God forgive your sins.

Matthew 6:16-18

THEME: *Jesus taught about abstaining from food.*

¹⁶“When you abstain from eating food *in order to please God*, do not look sad as the hypocrites look. They make their faces appear sad in order that people will see that they are abstaining from food *and will think highly of them*. Keep this in mind: *People will think highly of those people for that, but that is the only reward those people will get!*¹⁷ Instead, *each of*

^a Some Greek manuscripts add, “For the authority to rule, and the power to rule, is yours forever, and *people* should praise you forever.”

you, when you abstain from food, should comb your hair and wash your face *as usual*,¹⁸ in order that other people will not notice that you are fasting *because you will look as you always do*. But God, your Father, whom no one can see, *will observe that you are abstaining from food*. God your Father sees you even though no one else sees you, and he will reward you.

Matthew 6:19-21

THEME: *Jesus taught that we should do deeds that please God. That will be like putting treasures in heaven.*

¹⁹“Do not *selfishly* accumulate large quantities of money and material goods for yourselves on *this* earth, because *the earth is where everything perishes*. For example, on earth termites ruin things, and things rust, and thieves enter *buildings* and steal things.²⁰ Instead, do *deeds that will please God*. Your *doing such deeds will be like* storing treasures in heaven [MET]. *Nothing perishes in heaven*. In heaven no termites ruin *things*, nothing rusts, and thieves do not enter buildings and steal.²¹ Remember that the things that you *think are the most valuable are the things that* you will be constantly concerned about [MET]. So if you *want to be storing treasures in heaven*, you *need to be* constantly thinking about God and heaven, instead of your earthly possessions.

Matthew 6:22-23

THEME: *Jesus taught that we should be generous with what we possess.*

²²“Your eyes are *like* a lamp [MET] for your body, because they enable you to see things. So if your eyes are healthy, you are able to see everything well [MET]. *Similarly, if you are generous with your money and other possessions, you will be able to know much of what God wants you to know* [MET].²³ But if your eyes are bad, you are not able to see things well. And if that continues, the time will come when you will not be able to see at all. You will be in complete darkness [MET]. *Similarly, if you continue to be greedy, you will be in spiritual darkness. If all that your eyes can see and your mind can think about involves your greedily desiring material possessions, all that you do will be evil* [MET].

Matthew 6:24

THEME: *Jesus taught that we should not try to serve God and accumulate money at the same time.*

²⁴“No one is able to serve two *different* bosses *at the same time*. If he *tried to do that*, he would hate one of them and love the other one, or he would be loyal to one of them and despise the other one [DOU]. *Similarly, you cannot devote your life to worshipping God and worshipping money and material goods at the same time*.

Matthew 6:25-34

THEME: *Jesus taught that we should not worry about having enough food and clothes.*

²⁵“Because you *should be concerned about what God thinks is important and not about material goods*, I tell you that you should not worry about *things that you need in order to live*. Do not worry about whether you will have *enough food* to eat, and *things to drink, or enough clothes to wear*. It is important to have *sufficient food and drink* and clothing, but the way you conduct your lives is much more important [RHQ].²⁶ Look at the birds. They do not plant *seeds, and they do not* harvest *crops* and gather *produce* into barns. *They always have food to eat because God*, your Father who is in heaven, provides food for them. And **you** are certainly worth a lot more than birds [RHQ]! So you *can be assured that God will supply what you need!*²⁷ <None of you can, just by worrying, *add time to your life*./Can any of you, just by worrying, *add time to your life?*> [RHQ] You *cannot* add even one minute to your life! So you *should not worry about things such as food and clothing!*

²⁸“You should also not worry about *whether you will have enough clothes to wear* [RHQ]. Think about the way flowers *grow* in the fields. They do not work *to earn money*, and they do not make their own clothes.²⁹ But I tell you that even though *King Solomon, who lived long ago, wore very beautiful clothes*, his clothes were not as beautiful as one of those *flowers*.³⁰ God makes the wild plants very beautiful, *but they grow in the field for only a short time*. One day they grow, and the next day they are thrown into an oven {someone *cuts them* and throws them into an oven} *to be burned to make heat for baking bread*. But you are *more important to God than wild plants are, and you live much longer*. So <God will certainly provide clothes for **you** who *live a long time* but trust him so little!/will not God surely very adequately clothe **you**, who *live a long time* but trust him so little?> [RHQ]³¹ Because of God’s caring for you, do not worry and say, ‘Will we have anything to eat?’ or ‘Will we have anything to drink?’ or ‘Will we have clothes to wear [RHQ]?’³² Those who do not know God are always worrying about things like that. But **God**, your Father who is in heaven, knows that you need all those things, so you *shouldn’t worry about them*.³³ Instead, the most important thing you should be concerned about is to let God completely direct your life, and to strive *to live* righteously. *If you do that*, all the things that you *need* will be given to you {God will give you all the things *that you need*}.³⁴ So *each day* do not be worried about what will happen to you the next day, because *when* that day [PRS] comes, you will be concerned about *what happens during* that day. You will have enough to be concerned about each day. So *do not worry ahead of time*.

Matthew 7:1-5

THEME: Jesus taught that we should not condemn others for their faults since we have faults ourselves.

7 ¹“Do not talk about how sinfully others have acted, in order that God will not say how sinfully you have acted. ²If you condemn *other people*, God will condemn you. To the same extent that you condemn others, you will be condemned {God will condemn you}. ³◀None of you should be concerned *about someone else’s small faults* [MET]!/Why should any of you be concerned *about someone else’s small faults?*▶ [MET, RHQ] *That would be like noticing* a speck in that person’s eye. But you should *be concerned about your own big faults. They are like* [MET] planks in your own eye, which you do not notice. ⁴◀You should not say to other people *about their minor faults*, ‘Let me remove the specks from your eyes!’/Why do you say to other people *about their minor faults*, ‘Let me remove the specks from your eyes?’▶ [RHQ] *You should not say that if a plank is still in your own eye* [MET]. ⁵You hypocrite, *stop committing your own sins!* *That will be like* removing the plank from your own eye [MET]. Then, as a result, you will be able to perceive things spiritually so that you can help other people get rid of the *faults* [MET] *that are like* specks in their eyes.

Matthew 7:6

THEME: Jesus taught that we should not teach spiritual truth to those who will not appreciate it.

⁶“You do not give holy things to dogs *that would ignore those things* and attack you [CHI]. You do not throw pearls in front of hogs, *because they would just ignore them* and trample them. *Similarly*, do not give *precious spiritual truth to people you know will not value it but instead will do evil things to you.*

Matthew 7:7-11

THEME: Jesus taught that God is ready to give good things to us if we persist in prayer.

⁷“Keep asking *God for what you need*. If you do that, *he will give it to you*. Confidently keep *expecting God to give you the things that you need, and he will give them to you. It will be like* [MET] looking for what you need and finding it. Keep on *praying persistently to God. Then God will answer you. It will be like* [MET] knocking on a door in order to enter a room. And the way will be opened {God will open the way} for you *to get what you pray for*. ⁸Remember that *God will give things to everyone who continues to ask him for them. He will give things to whoever confidently keeps asking. He will open the way for people to get the things that they keep persistently praying for.*

⁹◀No man among you would give a stone to his son if his son were to ask for bread./Would anyone among you give a stone to his son if his son were to ask for bread?▶ [RHQ] ¹⁰Likewise, ◀no man would give a *poisonous* snake to his son if his son would ask for a fish./would anyone give a *poisonous* snake to his son if his son would ask for a fish?▶ [RHQ] ¹¹**You**, who are evil, know how to give good things to your children. So *God, your Father who is in heaven, will certainly give good things to the people who ask him.*

Matthew 7:12

THEME: Jesus taught that we should treat others as we would like them to treat us.

¹²“So in whatever way you want others to act toward you(pl), that is the way **you(pl)** should act toward them, because that *sums up what Moses wrote in the laws that God gave him and also what the prophets wrote long ago.*

Matthew 7:13-14

THEME: Jesus taught that we should try to walk on the narrow road that leads to heaven.

¹³⁻¹⁴“*Going to where people live eternally with God in heaven is difficult. It is like* going along a narrow road [PRS, MET] that leads to a narrow gate. Not many people find that way. *The way that most people take is easy, but it results in their being punished* {God punishing them} *in hell. That way is like* a wide road that people walk on [PRS, MET] until they reach the wide gate, but that road and that gate lead to where *they will be destroyed* {God will destroy them}. Many people enter that gate. So *I am telling you to leave the wide road and enter the narrow gate to heaven.*

Matthew 7:15-20

THEME: Jesus taught about how to recognize false prophets.

¹⁵“Beware of people who come to you and say falsely that they are telling you *what God has said. They seem to be harmless, but they are extremely harmful. They are like* wolves that have covered themselves with sheepskins *to make people believe that they are sheep* [MET], but they actually are wolves that attack people [MET]. ¹⁶*So how will you know that they are false?* Well, by seeing what plants produce, you know *what kind of plants they are* [MET]. *For example, thorn bushes cannot produce grapes, so* ◀no one can pick grapes from thorn bushes./can anyone pick grapes from thorn bushes?▶ [RHQ] *And thistles cannot produce figs, so* ◀no one can pick figs from thistles./can anyone pick figs from thistles?▶ [RHQ] ¹⁷*Here is another example:* All good fruit trees produce good fruit, but all rotten trees produce worthless

fruit. ¹⁸ No good fruit tree is able to produce worthless fruit, and no rotten tree is able to produce good fruit. ¹⁹ *And all the trees that do not produce good fruit are chopped down and burned in the fire {people chop them down and burn them in the fire} to get rid of them. Similarly, those who falsely claim to be prophets will be thrown {God will throw false prophets} into the fires of hell.* ²⁰ By seeing *what plants produce*, you know *what kind of plants they are*. Similarly, when you see *what the people who come to you do*, you will know if they are false prophets.

Matthew 7:21-23

THEME: *Jesus warned that he will reject those who do not do what God desires.*

²¹ “*Even though many people habitually call me ‘Lord’, pretending that they have my authority, some of them will not go to heaven where God rules, because they do not do what he desires. Only those people who do what my Father, who is in heaven, desires will go there.*” ²² On the day [MTY] that God judges everyone, many people, trying to tell me that they deserve to go to heaven, will say to me, ‘Lord, we(exc) spoke God’s message as your representatives [MTY, RHQ]! As your representatives we(exc) expelled demons from people [RHQ]! And as your representatives, many times we(exc) performed miracles [RHQ]!’ ²³ Then I will declare to them, ‘I have never said that you belonged to me. Go away from me, you who do what is evil!’

Matthew 7:24-27

THEME: *Jesus warned that undesirable things would happen to those who did not obey his teaching.*

²⁴ “So then, anyone who hears what I say and does what I command, will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. ²⁵ *Even though the rain came down and the river flooded, and the winds blew and beat against that house, it did not fall down because it had been built {he built it} on a solid foundation.*” ²⁶ On the other hand, anyone who hears what I say but does not obey what I say will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ When the rain fell and the river flooded, and the winds blew and beat against that house, it crashed down and broke completely apart, *because it was built on the sand. So it is important for you to obey what I teach you.*”

Matthew 7:28-29

THEME: *The crowds were amazed at Jesus, because he taught with his own authority.*

²⁸ When Jesus finished saying all those things, the crowd *who had heard him* was amazed at the *new teaching* that he had taught them. ²⁹ The reason they were amazed was that he was teaching as a person does who has *his own authority*. He was not teaching like the men who taught the *Jewish laws*, *who just repeated what other people had taught them*.

Matthew 8:1-4

THEME: *Jesus healed a leper and made it possible for him to associate with people again.*

8 ¹ When Jesus went down from the hillside, large crowds followed him. ² *After he left the crowds*, a man who had *the skin disease called leprosy* unexpectedly came and knelt before him. He said to Jesus, “Lord/Sir, *please heal me, because I know you are able to heal me if you are willing to.*” ³ Then Jesus, *disregarding the religious law that forbade people to come close to lepers*, stretched out his hand and touched the man. He said to him, “I am willing to *heal you*, and I heal you *now!*” Immediately the man was healed from his leprosy {he was no longer a leper}. ⁴ Then Jesus said to him, “Go and show yourself to a *nearby priest so that he can examine you and verify that you no longer have leprosy*. Then, after he tells *the local people*, they will know *that you no longer have leprosy, and you will be able to associate with them again*. Make sure that *now you do not report about my healing you to anyone other than the priest*. Then go to *the Temple in Jerusalem* and give the priest the offering that Moses commanded *that people who have been healed from leprosy should offer as a sacrifice to God.*”

Matthew 8:5-13

THEME: *Jesus healed from a distance a Roman officer’s servant because the officer trusted in him.*

⁵ When Jesus went to Capernaum city, a *Roman officer* who commanded one hundred soldiers came to him. He begged Jesus to *help him*. ⁶ He said to him, “Sir, my servant is lying *in bed* at home and is paralyzed, and he has severe pain.” ⁷ Jesus said to him, “I will go to *your house* and heal him.” ⁸ But the officer said to him, “Lord/Sir, *do not bother to go. I am a non-Jew*, so I am not worthy for you, a Jew, to come into my house [MTY] and associate with me. Instead, *just say that my servant is healed*, and he will be healed.” ⁹ I believe this because, **as for me**, I am a man under the authority of others, and I also have soldiers under my authority. When I say to one of them ‘Go!’ he goes. When I say to another ‘Come!’ he comes. When I say to my slave, ‘Do this!’ he does it. *And I believe that you speak with a similar kind of authority.*” ¹⁰ When Jesus heard this, he marveled. He said to the crowd that was walking with him, “Listen to this: I have never before found anyone who has as firm a faith *in me as this non-Jewish man has*. Not even in Israel, *where I would expect people to believe in me*, have I found anyone who has the kind of faith in me that he has!” ¹¹ I tell you truly that many *other non-Jewish people* who will believe in me like this Roman officer will come from *distant countries, including those far to the east*

and far to the west [SYN], and they will sit down to eat with [MTY] Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in heaven, where God rules. ¹² But *the Jews* [IDM] *who should have allowed* God to rule over them will be sent to *hell, where there is total darkness*. And as a result, they will weep *because of their suffering* and will grind their teeth *because they will have severe pain* [MTY].” ¹³ Then Jesus said to the officer, “Go home. What you believed *would happen, that I would heal your servant from a distance*, will happen.” *Then the officer went home and found out that his servant became well at the exact time that Jesus told him that he would heal him.*

Matthew 8:14-15

THEME: Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law.

¹⁴ When Jesus *and some of his disciples* went to the home of Peter, Jesus saw Peter’s mother-in-law. She was lying on a bed because she had a fever. ¹⁵ He touched her hand, and as a result, *immediately* she no longer had a fever [PRS]. Then she got up and served them *some food*.

Matthew 8:16-17

THEME: Jesus healed many sick people and expelled demons from other people.

¹⁶ That evening *when <the Sabbath/the Jewish rest day> ended and restrictions about traveling ended*, many people who were controlled by demons {whom demons controlled} *and people who were sick* [MTY] were brought to Jesus. He caused the demons to leave just by speaking to them, and he healed all the people who were sick. ¹⁷ By doing this he fulfilled the words that had been said by the prophet Isaiah {that the prophet Isaiah had said} *about the Messiah*: ‘He healed people who had sicknesses and he cured them of their diseases.’ [DOU]

Matthew 8:18-22

THEME: Jesus told a man what to expect if he went with Jesus. He told another man to follow Jesus immediately, not to wait until later.

¹⁸ Jesus saw the crowd around him, but *he needed to rest*. So he told *his disciples to take him by boat* to the other side of *the lake*. ¹⁹ *As they were walking toward the boat*, a man who taught the Jewish laws came to him and said, “Teacher, I will go with you wherever you go.” ²⁰ *In order that the man might know what he could expect if he went with him*, Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes *in the ground in which to live*, and birds have nests, but *even though I am the one who came from heaven*, I do not have a home where I can sleep [MTY].” ²¹ Another man who was one of Jesus’ disciples said to him, “Sir/Lord, permit me first to go *home. After my father dies I will bury him, and then I will come with you.*” ²² But Jesus said to him, “Come with me *now. God considers that people who do not have eternal life are dead* [MET]. Let those people *do the work of burying people who die.*”

Matthew 8:23-27

THEME: The disciples were amazed when Jesus calmed a storm on the lake.

²³ Then Jesus got into the boat. The disciples also got *in, and they started sailing around Lake Galilee*. ²⁴ Suddenly strong winds blew on the lake, and very high waves were splashing into the boat and filling it. But **Jesus** was sleeping. ²⁵ They went and woke him up, and said *to him*, “Sir/Lord, rescue us! We are about to drown!” ²⁶ He said *to them*, “<You should not be terrified!/Why are you terrified?> [RHQ] *I am disappointed that in spite of all you have seen me do, <you do not believe very much that I can rescue you./do you not believe that I can rescue you?> [RHQ]*” Then he got up and rebuked the wind and told the waves to calm down. *And the wind stopped blowing and the lake became calm.* ²⁷ *As a result*, they were amazed, and they said *to one another*, “This man is certainly an *extraordinary person* [RHQ]! *All things are under his control!* Even the winds and the waves obey him [PRS]!”

Matthew 8:28-34

THEME: Jesus expelled some demons from two men.

²⁸ When they came to the *east side of the lake*, they arrived in the region where the Gadarenes *lived. Jesus got out of the boat and began walking on the road. Then two men who were controlled by demons* {whom demons controlled} came out of the burial caves *where they were living*. Because they were extremely violent *and attacked people*, no one dared to travel on the road *near where they were living*. ²⁹ Suddenly they shouted *to Jesus*, “You are the Son of God! *Because you have nothing in common with us* [IDM, RHQ], *leave us alone!* Have you come here [RHQ] to torture us before the time [MTY] *God has appointed to punish us?*” ³⁰ There was a large herd of pigs *<grazing/rooting for food> not far away*. ³¹ So the demons begged Jesus, saying, “You are going to cast us out of the men, so send us into the herd of pigs!” ³² Jesus said *to them*, “*If that is what you want, go!*” So the demons left *the men* and entered the pigs. Suddenly the whole herd of pigs rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. ³³ The men who were tending the pigs *became afraid and ran into the town and reported everything that had happened*, including what had happened to the two men who had been controlled by demons {whom demons had controlled}. ³⁴ Then *it seemed as if all the people* [HYP] *who lived in that town* [MTY] went to meet Jesus. When they saw him *and the two men who had been controlled by the demons*, they

begged Jesus to leave their region *because they thought that he would destroy more things than just the pigs* (OR, *because they realized he must be very powerful*).

Matthew 9:1-8

THEME: *Jesus showed that he had power to forgive sins as well as to heal a paralyzed man.*

9 ¹ Jesus and his disciples got into the boat. They skirted around *the lake* and went to *Capernaum*, the city where he was *living*. ² *Some men* brought to him a man who was paralyzed and who was lying on a sleeping pad. When Jesus perceived that they believed *that he could heal the paralyzed man*, he said to him, “Young man, be encouraged! I forgive your sins.” ³ Some of the men who taught the *Jewish laws* said among themselves, “*He claims that he can forgive sins! That means that he claims to be equal with God! He is insulting God!*” ⁴ Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said, “*◀You should not think evil thoughts, accusing me because I claim that I am God!/Why do you think evil thoughts, saying that it is wrong for me to claim that I am God?▶* [RHQ] ⁵ It would *not* be risky for someone to say to this man, ‘I forgive your sins’, *because no one could see whether or not it really happened. But no one, without having the power to heal, would say to him, ‘Get up and walk!’, because people could easily see whether it happened or not!* [RHQ] ⁶ So I am going to do something in order that you may know that God has authorized me, the one who came from heaven, to forgive the sins of people while I am on the earth, *as well as to heal people.*” Then he said to the paralyzed man, “Get up, pick up your sleeping pad, and go home!” ⁷ And *immediately* the man got up, *picked up his sleeping pad*, and went home! ⁸ When the crowds saw this, they were awestruck. They praised God for giving authority to a human being to do such *things*.

Matthew 9:9-13

THEME: *Jesus invited Matthew to go with him, and he told the Pharisees that they needed to repent.*

⁹ As Jesus was going away from there, he saw me^b, a man named Matthew. I was sitting at a table where I collected taxes for the Roman government. He said to me, “Come with me and become my disciple!” So I got up and went with him. ¹⁰ Then I invited Jesus and his disciples to my home for a meal. While they were sitting and eating in my home, many tax collectors and other people who were {whom the Pharisees} considered to be habitual sinners came unexpectedly to eat with us. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw that, they came to us disciples and said, “*◀It is disgusting that your teacher, who claims to be righteous, eats and associates with tax collectors and other sinners!/Why is it that your teacher, who claims to be righteous, eats and associates with tax collectors and other sinners?▶*” [RHQ] ¹² Jesus heard what they said, so he told them *this parable*: “*It is people who are sick who need a doctor [MET], not people who are well.*” *What he meant by that was that it was people who knew that they were sinners who were coming to him in order to be helped spiritually.* ¹³ He continued by saying, “You need to learn what these words that God said mean: ‘I want you to act mercifully to people and not just to offer sacrifices.’ Keep in mind that I came from heaven, *not* to invite people who think [IRO] that they are righteous to turn away from their sinful lives and come to me, but to invite people who know they are sinners to turn from their sins and come to me.”

Matthew 9:14-17

THEME: *Jesus illustrated why it was not appropriate for his disciples to fast, and that living according to his new message was better than following the old traditions like fasting.*

¹⁴ Later, the disciples of John the Baptizer came to Jesus and asked him, “We(*exc*) and the Pharisees often abstain from food to show that we want to please God, but your disciples do not do that. Why do they not?” ¹⁵ Jesus wanted to show them and the Pharisees that it was not appropriate for his disciples to abstain from food and mourn while he was still with them. So he gave them *this illustration*: “When the bridegroom is with his friends at the time of the wedding, *◀the groom’s friends certainly do not mourn, do they?/do the groom’s friends mourn?▶* [RHQ] *No, they do not mourn, because they are not sad at that time. But when the bridegroom is taken {someone takes the groom/his enemies take the groom} from them, they will abstain from food, because then they will be sad.*”

¹⁶ Jesus wanted to show them that people who desire to live in accordance with his new message should not try to continue to obey the old religious traditions like *◀abstaining from food/fasting▶* [MET]. So he said to them, “People do not sew a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment to mend a hole. If they did that, when they washed the garment, the patch would shrink and tear the garment, and the hole would become bigger. ¹⁷ Neither does anyone pour freshly-squeezed grape juice into old skin bags to store it. If anyone did that, those skin bags would tear because they would not stretch when the grape juice ferments and expands. They would be ruined, and the wine would be spilled {spill} on the ground. Instead, people put new wine into new skin bags, and the bags will stretch when the wine ferments. As a result, both the wine and the bags are preserved.”

^b Scholars agree that the writer of this book was Matthew, one of Jesus twelve disciples. At this point in the book Matthew introduces himself. But as most of the people of the time (including Jesus) did, he refers to himself in the third person singular. So, to make clear to readers that Matthew was indeed one of the twelve disciples, from this point on and throughout the rest of the book, where it is clear that Matthew was one of the participants, first person pronouns are used.

Matthew 9:18-26

THEME: *Jesus healed a woman who had constant hemorrhaging. He also caused a young girl to become alive again.*

¹⁸ While Jesus was saying that, a leader of the Jewish meeting place came and bowed down before him to show respect. Then he said, "My daughter just died! But if you come and lay your hand on her, she will live again!" ¹⁹ So Jesus got up, and he and we disciples went with the man. ²⁰⁻²¹ Then a woman who had been suffering constant vaginal bleeding [EUP] for twelve years came near Jesus. She was saying to herself, "I want Jesus to heal me without anyone finding out that I have this problem of bleeding. So if I touch him or even if I just touch his garment, I will be healed without anyone finding out about it." So she came behind him and touched the tassel of his garment. ²² Then Jesus turned around to see who had touched him. And when he saw the woman, he said to her, "Be encouraged, dear woman. Because you believed [PRS] that I could heal you, I have healed you." The woman was healed at that very moment.

²³ Then Jesus and some of us disciples came to Jairus' house. Jesus heard the flute players playing funeral music and the crowd that had gathered wailing loudly because the girl had died. ²⁴ Knowing that he would cause her to live again, he said to them, "Go away and stop the funeral music and wailing, because the girl is not dead! She is just sleeping!" [EUP] The people laughed at him, because they knew that she was dead. ²⁵ But Jesus told them to get out of the house. Then he went into the room where the girl was lying. He took hold of her hand and she became alive again and got up. ²⁶ And the people of that whole region heard [PRS] about it.

Matthew 9:27-31

THEME: *Jesus healed two blind men.*

²⁷ As Jesus went away from there, two blind men followed him and shouted, "Have mercy on us and heal our eyes, you who are the Messiah, the Descendant of King David!" ²⁸ Jesus went into his own house, and then the blind men went in, too. Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to heal your eyes?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord!" ²⁹ Then he touched their eyes and he said to them, "Because you believe that I can heal your eyes, I am healing them right now!" ³⁰ And they were able to see! [IDM] Then Jesus told them sternly, "Be sure [IDM] that you do not tell anybody what I did for you!" ³¹ But they went out and reported it throughout that whole region.

Matthew 9:32-34

THEME: *Jesus expelled a demon, but the Pharisees accused him of doing such things by Satan's power.*

³² When Jesus and we disciples left his house, some people brought to Jesus a man who was unable to speak because he was controlled by a demon {a demon controlled him}. ³³ After Jesus had expelled the demon, the man who had been unable to speak began to speak! The crowd who saw this marveled. They said, "Never before have we seen anything as marvelous as this happen in Israel!" ³⁴ But the Pharisees said, "It is Satan, who rules the demons, who enables this man to expel demons from people."

Matthew 9:35-38

THEME: *Jesus told his disciples to pray that God would send more workers to tell his message to those who were ready to respond.*

³⁵ Then we went with Jesus through many of [HYP] the cities and towns in Galilee district. He was teaching <in the synagogues/in the Jewish meeting places>, and preaching the good message about how God rules over people's lives. He also was healing the people who had various diseases and illnesses. ³⁶ When he saw the crowd of people, he pitied them because they were harassed and dejected. They were like sheep that do not have a shepherd [SIM]. ³⁷ Then he gave this illustration to us disciples: "The people who are ready to receive my message are like a field that is ready to be harvested {for people to harvest}. But there are only a few of you who are teaching people my message. ³⁸ So pray and ask the Lord God to send more workers who will gather people together and teach them my message, just like a landowner sends workers into his field to gather the [MET] harvest."

Matthew 10:1-15

THEME: *Jesus selected twelve apostles and instructed them before sending them out to various places.*

10 ¹ He told us twelve disciples to come to him. Then he gave us the power/authority to expel evil spirits that controlled people. He also enabled us to heal all people who had diseases or who were sick. ² Here is a list of us twelve disciples whom he called apostles (which means 'messengers'): Simon, to whom he gave the new name Peter; Andrew, Peter's younger brother; James, the son of Zebedee; John, the younger brother of James; ³ Philip; Bartholomew; Thomas; me, Matthew, the tax collector; James, the son of Alpheus; Thaddeus; ⁴ Simon, a member of the party that wanted to overthrow the Roman government; and Judas Iscariot, who later enabled the Jewish leaders to seize Jesus.

⁵ When Jesus was about to send us twelve apostles to tell his message to people in various places, he gave us these instructions: "Do not go where the non-Jews live [MTY] or into the towns where the Samaritans live, because they hate you. ⁶ Instead, go to the people of Israel [SYN] who have gone away from God like sheep that have gotten lost [MET] have

gone away *from their shepherd*.⁷ When you go to *them*, proclaim to them that God [EUP/MTY] will soon begin to rule over people.⁸ Heal sick people, cause dead people to become alive, heal people who have leprosy, and cause demons to leave people *who are controlled by them* {whom demons control}. Do not charge money for helping people, because God did not charge you anything for helping you.⁹⁻¹⁰ Do not take any money with you [MTY], nor a knapsack. Do not take an extra shirt, nor sandals *in addition to what you are wearing*, nor a walking stick. Every worker deserves to get pay *from the people for whom he works*, so you deserve to receive food and a place to stay from the people to whom you go.¹¹⁻¹² In whatever town or village you enter, find out which person is worthy *that you should stay in his home*. And as you go into that house, ask God to bless the people *who live there* [MTY]. Stay in that home until you leave *that town or village*.¹³ If the people who live in [MTY] that house are worthy of being blessed {God blessing them}, God will bless them. If the people who live in that house are not worthy of being blessed {of God blessing them}, God will bless you *instead of blessing them*.¹⁴ If the people *who live in any house or town* do not welcome you to their home or town, nor listen to your message, leave that house or town. And as you leave, shake off the dust from your feet. *By doing that, you will warn them that God will punish them for rejecting your message*.¹⁵ Note this carefully: *At the time when God judges all people, he will punish the people who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah* [MTY], *the ancient cities which God destroyed because their people were extremely wicked*. But in any town where *the people* [MTY] *refused to hear your message*, God will punish them **very** severely.”

Matthew 10:16-25

THEME: *Jesus instructed his disciples to be wary of their religious leaders and to endure when they are persecuted by people who refuse to accept the new message.*

¹⁶ “Take note: After I send you out, *you will be as defenseless* as sheep [MET] in the midst of *people who are as dangerous as wolves*. You, *on your part, should wisely stay away from such people, like you stay away from poisonous snakes* [SIM]. You should be as harmless as doves are [SIM].¹⁷ Also, be on guard against *our religious leaders*. They will arrest you and take you to the members of the religious councils *to put you on trial and punish you because you are my disciples*. You will be whipped {The local leaders will whip you} *in their meeting places*.¹⁸ *And because you teach about me, you will be taken* {the religious leaders will take you} *to governors and kings in order that they may put you on trial and punish you*. As a result, you will testify to those rulers and to *other non-Jews about what I have done*.¹⁹ When *the religious leaders* arrest you, do not be worried about what you will say *to them*, because at that very time *the Holy Spirit will tell you the words that you should say*.²⁰ It is not that you *will decide what to say*. Instead, you will say what the Spirit of your *heavenly Father tells you to say*.²¹ *You will be taken* {People who do not believe in me will take you} *to the authorities to be killed because you believe in me*. For example, people will do that to their brothers, and fathers will do that to their children. Children will rebel against their parents and cause *them* to be killed.²² Many people will hate you *because you believe in me*. Nevertheless, *many people* will keep on believing in me until they die [EUP]. **They are the people** whom God will take to live with him.²³ When people in one town cause you to suffer, escape to another town *and tell the people there about me*. Note this: *I, the one who came down from heaven, will certainly return to earth* before you have finished going from one town to another town throughout Israel *and telling people about me*.

²⁴ “A disciple should not *expect to be greater than his teacher, and servants are not superior to their master*.²⁵ You do not *expect that people will treat a disciple better than they treat his teacher, or that they will treat a servant better than they treat his master*. *Similarly, because I am your teacher and master, you can expect that people will mistreat you, because they have mistreated me*. The most you can expect is that people *will treat you like they treat me*. *I am like the ruler of a household* [MET]. But people *have insulted me by calling me Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons*. So they *will certainly insult you more, you who are only like members of my household* [MET]!

Matthew 10:26-33

THEME: *Jesus instructed his disciples that they should not fear those who persecute them.*

²⁶ “Do not be afraid of *people who insult you and do evil things to you*. God wants everything that is unknown now to be revealed {God wants you to reveal everything that is unknown now}. He does not want his truth to remain hidden [MET] and kept secret [DOU].²⁷ So, *instead of being afraid, what I say to you secretly as people do at night* [MTY], tell *publicly as people do during the daytime* [MTY]. What I say to you *privately as people do when they whisper to you* [MTY], proclaim publicly [MTY, DOU].²⁸ Do not be afraid of people who *are able to kill your body* [SYN] but are not able to destroy your soul. Instead, fear God because he is able to destroy both a *person’s body and a person’s soul in hell*.²⁹ *Think about the sparrows. They have so little value that you can buy two of them for only one small coin* [RHQ]. But when *any sparrow falls to the ground and dies* [LIT], God, your *heavenly Father, knows it, because he knows everything*.³⁰ *He knows everything about you, too*. He even knows how many hairs you have on your head!³¹ God values **you** much more than he values sparrows [LIT]. So, do not be afraid of *people who threaten to kill you!*³² If people, *without being afraid, are willing to tell others that they are my disciples, I will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven that they are my disciples*.³³ But if they are afraid to say in front of others that they are my disciples, I will tell my Father, who is in heaven, *that they are not my disciples*.

Matthew 10:34-39

THEME: *Jesus instructed his disciples that they should be willing to suffer because of their faith in him.*

³⁴“Do not think that I came to earth to cause *people* to live together harmoniously. The result of my coming is that *some of those who follow me* [MTY] will be killed. ³⁵Because I came to *earth*, *people who do not believe in me* will oppose *those who do believe in me*. For example, some sons will oppose their fathers, some daughters will oppose their mothers, and some daughters-in-law will oppose their mothers-in-law. ³⁶*This shows that sometimes* a person’s enemies will be members of his own household. ³⁷People who love their fathers or mothers more than *they love me* are not worthy to *have a relationship with me*. And people who love their sons or daughters more than *they love me* are not worthy to *belong to me*. ³⁸*People who are ready to execute a prisoner force him to carry a cross to the place where they will nail him to it* [MET]. Those who are not *willing to allow other people to hurt and disgrace them like that because of being my disciples* are not worthy to belong to me. ³⁹People who *deny that they believe in me in order to escape being killed* will not live *with God eternally* [MET], but people who *confess that they believe in me* and, as a result are killed, will live *with God eternally* [MET].

Matthew 10:40-11:1

THEME: *Jesus instructed his apostles about the people whom God rewards, and then he sent them to various towns.*

⁴⁰“*God considers that everyone who welcomes you, welcomes me* [SIM], and *he considers that everyone who welcomes me welcomes him*, the one who sent me [SIM]. ⁴¹Those who welcome *someone because* [MTY] *they know* that person is a prophet they will receive the *same reward that prophets receive from God*. Likewise, those who welcome a person *because* [MTY] *they know* that person is righteous they will receive the reward righteous people *receive from God*. ⁴²*Note this:* Suppose people *see that you are thirsty* [MTY] and give you a drink of cold water because they know that [MTY] you are one of my disciples. *God will certainly reward people who do that. They might consider that what they did is insignificant, but God will consider it very significant.*” [LIT]

11 ¹When Jesus had finished instructing *us* twelve disciples *about what we should do*, he sent *us* to various Israelite towns. Then he went to teach and preach in *other Israelite towns in that area*.

Matthew 11:2-15

THEME: *Jesus showed the messengers from John the Baptizer that he was the Messiah, and he told the people that John was the man like Elijah who was to prepare the way for the Messiah.*

²While John *the Baptizer* was in prison, he heard what *the man whom he thought was the Messiah* was doing. So he sent *some of his disciples to him* in order ³to ask him, “Are **you** the *Messiah* who *the prophets prophesied* would come, or is it **someone else** that we should expect to come?” ⁴*After they asked Jesus that question*, he answered them, “Go back and report to John what you hear *me telling people* and what you see *me doing*. ⁵*I am enabling* blind people to see and lame people to walk. *I am healing people* who have leprosy. *I am enabling* deaf people to hear and dead people to become alive again. *I am telling poor people God’s good message*. ⁶*Also tell John that God is pleased with people who do not stop believing in me because what I do is not what they expected the Messiah to do.*”

⁷When John’s disciples had gone away, Jesus began to talk to the crowd of people about John. He said to them, “*Think about what sort of person you went to see in the desolate area when you went there to see John. <You did not go there to listen to a man who constantly changed his message, like a reed that is blown {blows} back and forth in the wind* [MET]!/Did you go there *to listen to a man whose message changes continually like long grass that is blown {blows} back and forth in the wind changes its direction?*” [MET, RHQ] ⁸Then what *kind of person* did you go *there* to see? [RHQ] *<You did not go there to see a man who was wearing expensive clothes./Did you go there to see a man who was wearing expensive clothes?>* [RHQ] *No! You know very well that people who wear beautiful clothes reside in kings’ palaces and not in desolate areas.* ⁹Then what *kind of person* did you go to see? [RHQ] *Did you go there* [RHQ] *to see John because he was <a prophet/a person who speaks what God tells him to say>? Yes! But I will tell you that John is more important than an ordinary prophet.* ¹⁰**He** is the one *to whom God was referring when he said to the Messiah these words that are written {about whom the prophet Malachi wrote} in the Scriptures:*

Listen! I am going to send my messenger *to go before you* [SYN] to prepare *the people* [MET] for your coming.

¹¹Note this: Of all the people who have ever lived, *God does not consider* that any of them are greater than John the Baptizer. However, *God considers that all those people who have let God rule their lives are greater than John, even if they are insignificant people.* ¹²From the time that John the Baptizer *preached* until now, *other people* have violently attacked the people who have *allowed* God [MTY/EUP] to rule their lives and they have suffered (OR, people have very eagerly been asking God to take control of their lives, OR, Israelite people *who have thought that I would become their king* have been extremely eager to be included in my kingdom) (OR, have been violently attacked and made to suffer). ¹³*All this that I am saying about John is confirmed by the fact that all the men who wrote the Scriptures* [MTY, SYN] *foretold about God ruling people’s lives, until John the Baptizer came.* ¹⁴*Even though most of you are unwilling to believe what I am saying, I will tell this truth to anyone who is willing to believe it: John is the man who is like Elijah* [MET]. He is the one who *one of the prophets said* would come *in order to prepare the people to welcome the Messiah.* ¹⁵If you want to understand this, you must think *carefully* [MTY] *about what I have just said* [MTY].”

Matthew 11:16-19

THEME: *Jesus rebuked the people who refused to believe both him and John the Baptizer.*

¹⁶ “<I will illustrate what you people who have heard what John *the Baptizer* and I have taught are like./Do you know what you people who have heard what John and I have taught are like?> [RHQ] You are like children who are *playing games* in an open area. *Some of the children* are calling to the others, saying, ¹⁷ ‘We played *happy music* on the flute for you, but you did not dance! Then we sang sad funeral songs for you, but you did not cry [MET]!’ ¹⁸ *Similarly, you are dissatisfied with both John and me!* When John came *and preached to you*, he did not eat good food and did not drink wine, *like most people do*. But you *rejected him* saying, ‘A demon is controlling him!’ ¹⁹ *In contrast, I*, the one who came from heaven, eat *the same food* and drink wine *as other people do*. But you *reject me*, saying, ‘Look! *This man* eats too much food and drinks too much wine, and he associates with tax collectors and *other sinners!*’ But people *who really think about what John and I have done* will realize that what we do is truly wise [MET, PRS].”

Matthew 11:20-24

THEME: *Jesus explained why the people of Corazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum would be punished more severely than the people of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom.*

²⁰ *The people, who lived in the towns [MTY] in the area where Jesus was, saw him perform many miracles.* But they did not turn away from their sinful behavior. So Jesus began to reproach them *by saying to them*, ²¹ “You people who live in Chorazin city [MTY] and you people who live in Bethsaida city [MTY] will suffer terribly in hell! *I did great miracles in your cities, but you did not turn from your sinful behavior.* If the miracles that I performed in your cities had been done in the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon, the wicked people who lived there long ago would have sat in ashes, wearing coarse cloth to show that they were sorry for their sins. ²² So note this: *God will punish the wicked people who lived in the cities of Tyre and Sidon [MTY], but he will punish you even more severely on the final day when he judges all people.* ²³ *I also have something to say to you people who live in Capernaum city [MTY].* <Do not think that you will be honored {that God will honor you} in heaven!/Do you think that you will be honored {that God will honor you} in heaven?> [RHQ] *That will not happen! On the contrary, after you die, you will be sent {God will send you} down into the place where sinful people will be punished {he will punish sinful people} forever! God destroyed the ancient city of Sodom because the people who lived in that city were extremely wicked.* If I had performed in Sodom the miracles that I performed in your city, *the people there would have turned away from their wicked behavior and their city [MET] would still exist now [MTY].* But you, *although I did miracles in your city, did not turn from your wicked behavior.* ²⁴ So note this: *God will punish the people who lived in Sodom city [MTY], but he will punish you even more severely on the final day when he judges all people.*”

Matthew 11:25-30

THEME: *Jesus thanked God for revealing his truth to uneducated people, and he urged the people to come to him to get rid of the burden of trying to obey religious laws.*

²⁵ At that time Jesus prayed, “Father, you rule over everything in heaven and on the earth. I thank you that you have prevented people who think that they are wise [IRO] because they are well-educated from knowing these things. *Instead, you have revealed them to people who accept your truth as readily as little children [MET] do.* ²⁶ Yes, Father, *you have done that* because it seemed good to you to do so.”

²⁷ Then Jesus said to the people there who wanted him to teach them, “God, my Father, has revealed to me all the things that I need to know in order to do my work. Only my Father knows who I really am. Furthermore, only I and those people to whom I wish to reveal him know what God my Father is like. ²⁸ Come to me, all you people who are very weary of trying to obey all the many laws that your religious teachers tell you to obey [MET]. I will enable you to quit trying to obey all those laws. ²⁹⁻³⁰ Let me help you carry those loads, just like two oxen who have a yoke on their necks [MET, DOU] help each other pull a heavy load. It will not be difficult for you to do the things that I ask you to do for me [DOU]. Because I am gentle and humble, [DOU] accept what I teach about what God wants you to do. And as a result, you will quit worrying about obeying all the religious laws, and your spirits will be at peace.”

Matthew 12:1-8

THEME: *Jesus showed the religious leaders that the Scriptures indicated that God permitted some people to disobey religious laws when they needed food. He also showed them that he had the authority from God to tell people what was right to do on the Sabbath.*

12 ¹ During that period of time, on a <Sabbath/Jewish day of rest>, Jesus and we disciples were walking through some grain fields. And because we were hungry, we began to pick some of the heads of grain and eat them. *The laws of Moses permitted people to do that if they were hungry.* ² Some Pharisees saw us do what they considered to be work. So they said to Jesus, *accusing him*, “Look! Your disciples are doing work that our laws [PRS] do not permit us to do on our day of rest!” ³ Jesus wanted to show them that the record in the Scriptures indicated that God permitted people to disobey certain religious laws when they needed food. So he said to them, “*It is written {Someone wrote} in the Scriptures [RHQ] what our revered ancestor King David did when he and the men with him were hungry. You have read about that, <but you do not think about what it implies!/so why do you not think about what it implies?> [RHQ]* ⁴ David entered the big tent where they

worshipped God and asked for some food. The high priest gave him the bread that had been {they had} presented to God. According to the laws of Moses, only priests were permitted to eat that bread, but David and the men who were with him ate it. And God did not consider that what they did was wrong!⁵ Also, think about the laws that Moses wrote [RHQ]. He said that even though the priests, by working in the Temple on our Jewish day of rest, are not obeying the Jewish day of rest laws, they are not guilty. You have surely read that, but you do not understand what it means.⁶ Note this: God allows men to work in the Temple on our rest day because that work must be done. But in addition, I tell you that I have more authority than the authority of the Temple. So, it is more important for you to obey my teachings than to obey your traditions about our rest day.⁷ You should think about these words of God in the Scriptures: 'I want you to act mercifully toward people, and not just offer sacrifices.' If you understood what that means, you would not condemn my disciples, who have done no wrong.⁸ I want you to know that I, the one who came from heaven, have the authority to determine what is right for my disciples to do on the days of rest."

Matthew 12:9-14

THEME: Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath. At the same time, he told the Pharisees that they were mistaken in thinking that it was wrong to heal a person on the Sabbath.

⁹ After Jesus left there that day, he went into a building where we Jews worship God. ¹⁰ He saw a man with a shriveled hand there. The Pharisees thought that Jesus would be disobeying the tradition about not working on the day of rest if he healed the man, so one of them asked him, "Does God permit us to heal people on our day of rest?" They asked that question so that they might accuse him if he healed someone <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day>. ¹¹ He replied to them, "Would anyone among you who has only one sheep that falls into a hole <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day> just leave it there [RHQ]? Certainly not! You would take hold of it and lift it out right away, and that would be acceptable work on our day of rest, too!" ¹² Because sheep are valuable, their owners may work on our day of rest in order to rescue them. So, because people are more valuable than sheep, it is certainly right for us to do something good by healing another person any day, including our day of rest!" ¹³ Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your withered hand!" The man stretched it out, and it became normal like the other hand! ¹⁴ Then the Pharisees left the meeting house. They were worried that the people would reject their traditions and would accept Jesus' teaching instead. So they met together to plan how they could kill him.

Matthew 12:15-21

THEME: Jesus explained that his acting humbly when he healed people was a fulfillment of prophecy.

¹⁵ Because Jesus knew that the Pharisees were plotting to kill him, he took us disciples and went away from there. Crowds, including many sick people, followed him, wanting him to heal them, and he healed them all. ¹⁶ But he told them firmly that they should not tell other people yet who he was. ¹⁷ By acting humbly like that he fulfilled what was written by Isaiah the prophet {what Isaiah the prophet wrote} long ago about the Messiah. Isaiah wrote that God said:

¹⁸ Take note of my servant whom I have chosen, the one whom I love and with whom I am pleased. I will put my Spirit in him, and he will proclaim that God will judge the non-Jews justly. ¹⁹ He will not quarrel with people, neither will he shout. He will not teach with a loud voice in the main streets. ²⁰ Until he has justly judged the people who trust in him and has declared them not guilty, he will not destroy anyone who is weak like a smashed stalk [MET], nor will he silence anyone who is helpless like a smoldering linen wick [MET, DOU]. ²¹ As a result, the non-Jews will confidently expect that he will do great things for them.

Matthew 12:22-32

THEME: Jesus refuted the argument that he was expelling demons by Satan's power, and he warned that making such statements is an unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit.

²² One day when Jesus was at home, some men brought to Jesus a man who, because of being controlled by a demon {a demon controlled him}, was blind and unable to speak. Jesus healed him by expelling the demon. As a result, the man began to talk and was able to see. ²³ All the crowd who saw it marveled. They began asking each other, "Could this man be the Messiah, the descendant of King David, whom we have been expecting?" ²⁴ Because the Pharisees and the men who taught the Jewish laws heard that the people thought that Jesus might be the Messiah because he had expelled the demon, they said, "It is not God, but Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, who enables this man to expel demons from people!" ²⁵ But Jesus knew what the Pharisees were thinking and saying. So, in order to show them that what they said did not make sense, he said to them, "If the people in [MTY] one nation fight against each other, they will destroy their nation {their nation will be destroyed}. If people who live in the same city or house fight each other, they will certainly not remain as one group or family. ²⁶ Similarly, if Satan were expelling his own demons [MTY], it would be as though he was fighting against himself. <His kingdom would not continue!/How could his kingdom continue?> [RHQ] His rule over them would certainly not last! ²⁷ Furthermore, if it is true that Satan enables me to expel demons, is it also true that your disciples who expel demons do so by Satan's power? [RHQ] No! So they will show you that you are not thinking logically. ²⁸ But because it is God's Spirit who enables me to expel demons, that proves that the power of God to rule people's lives has come to you.

²⁹ "I will illustrate why I am able to expel demons. <A person cannot go into the house of a strong man [MET] like Satan and carry off his possessions if he does not first bind the strong man./How can someone go into the house of a strong

man [MET] *like Satan* and carry off his possessions if he does not first bind the strong man?> [RHQ] *But if he binds the strong man*, then he will be able to steal *the things in that man's house*.

³⁰ “*No one can be neutral*. Those who do not acknowledge *that the Holy Spirit enables me to expel demons* are opposing me, and those who do not gather *people to become my disciples* are causing *those people* to [DOU] go away from me.

³¹ “*You are saying that it is not the Holy Spirit who is enabling me to expel demons*. So I will say this to you: *If those who offend and slander other people in any way are then sorry and ask God to forgive them*, God will forgive them. But people who discredit what the Holy Spirit does will not be forgiven {*God will not forgive people who discredit what the Holy Spirit does*}. ³² *God is willing to forgive people who criticize me*, the One who came from heaven. But I *warn you that those who say evil things about what the Holy Spirit does will not be forgiven* {*God will not forgive people who speak evil words about what the Holy Spirit does*}. They will not be forgiven {*He will not forgive them*} now, and they will never be forgiven {*he will never forgive them*}.”

Matthew 12:33-37

THEME: *Jesus said that we can judge what people are like by seeing what they do.*

³³ “Think about this: You can know whether *a person is good and what that person says is good, in the same way that you can know whether a tree [MET] and the fruit it produces [MET] are good*. *You can also know whether a person and what that person says is evil in the same way that you can know whether a tree [MET] and its fruit [MET] are blighted*. You can know whether a tree is good by *seeing its fruit*, and similarly *people can know the evil character of you Pharisees by listening to your accusations against me*. ³⁴ *What you teach harms people spiritually like poisonous snakes harm them physically [MET]!* You are not able to speak good things because you are evil [RHQ]. Evil people [SYN] *like you* speak what comes from all that is in their <inner beings/hearts>. ³⁵ *Good people speak good things. That is like taking good things out of buildings where they are stored*. But evil people *speak evil things. That is like taking evil things out of buildings where they are stored*. ³⁶ I tell you that on the day when God judges [MTY], he will make people recall every useless word they have spoken, *and he will judge them accordingly*. ³⁷ *God will either declare that you are righteous based on the words that you have spoken, or else he will condemn you based on what you have said.*”

Matthew 12:38-42

THEME: *Jesus told the Jewish leaders that the only miracle that they would see him do would be one like God did for Jonah.*

³⁸ Then some of the Pharisees and men who taught the *Jewish laws* responded to *what Jesus was teaching* by saying to him, “Teacher, we want to see you *perform a miracle that would prove to us that God sent you*.” ³⁹ Then Jesus said to them, “*You people have already seen me perform miracles*, but you are evil, and you do not faithfully worship God [MET]! You want *me to perform a miracle that would prove to you that God sent me*, but *God will enable you to see only one miracle*. It will be *like what happened to Jonah the prophet [MET]*. ⁴⁰ *Jonah was in the stomach of a huge fish for three days and nights before God caused him to live again*. Similarly, for three days and nights I, the one who came from heaven, will be in a place *where dead people are, and then God will cause me to live again*. ⁴¹ When God judges *all people*, the people who lived in Nineveh will stand *in front of him with you people who have seen me perform miracles*. The *people of Nineveh* turned from their sinful ways as a result of *hearing what Jonah preached. Jonah was important, but I, who am more important than Jonah, have come and preached to you, but you have not turned from your sinful ways*. So when God judges *all people*, he will condemn you. ⁴² The queen from *Sheba, South of Israel, who lived long ago*, came from a distant region in order to listen to King Solomon *teach many wise things*. But now *I, a man who is much greater and wiser than Solomon*, am here, *but you have not listened to what I have told you*. So at the time when God judges *all people*, the queen from *Sheba* will stand *in front of him, along with you people, and will condemn you*.”

Matthew 12:43-45

THEME: *Jesus taught that those who have had evil spirits expelled from them need to have their lives controlled by the Holy Spirit.*

⁴³ “*Sometimes* when an evil spirit leaves a person, it wanders around in desolate areas, seeking *someone in whom it can rest*. If it does not find anyone, ⁴⁴ it says *to itself*, ‘I will return to the person [MET] in whom I used to live.’ So it goes back *and finds that the Spirit of God is not in control of that person's life. The person's life is like a house that has been swept clean and everything put in order [MET], but it is empty*. ⁴⁵ Then *this evil spirit* goes and gets seven other spirits that are *even more evil*, and they *all enter that person and begin living there*. So, *although that person's condition was bad before, it becomes much worse*. That is what *you wicked people who have heard me teach* will experience.”

Matthew 12:46-50

THEME: *Jesus said that those who do God's will are as important to Jesus as his own relatives are.*

⁴⁶ While Jesus was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his *younger brothers arrived*. They stood outside *the house*, wanting to speak with him. ⁴⁷ Someone said to him, “Your mother and your *younger brothers* are standing outside *the house*, wanting to talk to you.” ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to the person who told him *that*, “<*I will tell you something about my mother and brothers [MET]./Do you know who I consider to be like my mother and my brothers?>*” [MET, RHQ] ⁴⁹ He then

pointed toward *us* disciples and said, “These are ones *whom I love as much as I love* my mother and my brothers [MET].⁵⁰ Those who do what *God my Father who is* in heaven wants, are as *dear to me* [MET] as my brother, my sister, or my mother.”

Matthew 13:1-9

THEME: *Jesus taught a parable about different kinds of soil.*

13 ¹ That same day Jesus, *along with us disciples*, left the house *where he was teaching and went* to Galilee lake. He sat down there, ² and a very large crowd gathered around him to *listen to his teaching*. So, *in order that they would not jostle him* (OR, *to speak to the people better*), he got into a boat and sat down *to teach them*. The crowd stood on the shore *and was listening*. ³ He was telling them many parables. *One of the parables* that he told them was this: “Listen! A man went out to *his field* to sow *some seeds*. ⁴ As he was scattering *them over the soil*, some of the seeds fell on the path. Then some birds came and ate those seeds. ⁵ Other *seeds* fell on ground where there was not much soil *on top of the rock*. Those seeds sprouted very soon, *because the sun quickly warmed* the shallow soil. ⁶ But when *the young plants came up*, they were scorched by the sun, and they withered because they did not have *deep roots*. ⁷ Other seeds fell on *ground that contained roots of thorny weeds*. The thorny weeds grew *together with the young plants*, and they crowded out *the plants*. ⁸ But other seeds fell on good soil, and *the plants grew and produced a lot of grain*. Some *plants produced* one hundred times as *many seeds as were planted*. Some *plants produced* sixty times as *much*. Some *plants produced* thirty times as *much*. ⁹ If you want to understand this [MTY], you should consider *carefully what I have just said*.”

Matthew 13:10-17

THEME: *Jesus told the disciples why he taught them using parables.*

¹⁰ We disciples approached Jesus and said to him, “Why do you use **parables** when you speak to the crowd?” ¹¹ He answered *us* by saying, “God [EUP/MTY] is revealing to you what he did not reveal before, about *how he wants to rule over peoples’ lives*. But he has not revealed it to others. ¹² Those who *think about what I say and understand it*, God will enable them to understand more. But those who do not *think carefully about what I say* will forget even what they already know. ¹³ That is why I use parables when I speak to people, because although they see *what I do*, they do not perceive *what it means*, and although they hear *what I say*, they do not really understand *what it means*. ¹⁴ What these people do completely fulfills what *God told* the prophet Isaiah *to say long ago to the people who did not try to understand what he said*,

You will hear *what I say*, but you will not understand it. You will keep seeing *what I do*, but you will not understand *what it means* [DOU].

¹⁵ *God also said to Isaiah*,

These people have become unresponsive [MTY] *to what they see me do and to what they hear me say*. They listen unwillingly [MTY] *to what I say*, and they do not pay attention to [MTY] *what I do*. If it were not so, they would perceive [MTY] *what I am doing*, they would understand [MTY] *what I say to them*, and they would turn away from their *sinful lives* and turn *to me*, and I would save them *from being punished for their sins* [MET].

¹⁶ But as for **you**, God is pleased with you because you [SYN] have seen *what I have done* and because you [SYN] understand *what I say* [DOU]. ¹⁷ Note this: Many prophets and righteous people *who lived long ago* longed to see what you are seeing *me do*, but they did not see it. They longed to hear the things that you have been hearing *me say*, but they did not hear *what you hear me say*.” [DOU]

Matthew 13:18-23

THEME: *Jesus explained that the parable about the kinds of soil illustrates four different ways people respond to his teaching.*

¹⁸ “Since *God wants you to understand what I am teaching you*, listen as I *explain* the parable about the man who sowed *seeds in various kinds of soil*. ¹⁹ The people who hear about how *God rules over people’s lives* and do not understand *what they have heard* are like the path where *some of the seeds* fell. *Satan*, the Evil One, comes and causes these people to forget [MET] what they have heard [MET]. ²⁰ *Some people are like the shallow soil on top of rock*. When they hear *God’s message*, they **immediately** accept it joyfully. ²¹ *But because it does not penetrate deeply into their hearts*, they believe it for *only a short time*. They are like the *plants that did not have deep roots*. When they are treated badly and caused to suffer because they believe *God’s message*, they soon stop believing it. ²² *Some people are like the soil that had the roots of thorny weeds* in it. They hear *God’s message*, but they desire to be rich, so they worry *only* about [MTY, PRS] material things. As a result, they [PRS] forget *God’s message* and they do not do [IDI] the things that *God wants them to do*. ²³ But *some people are like the good soil where some of the seeds* fell. *Just like the plants that grew in this soil* produced a lot of grain, *these people* hear my message and understand it. *Some of them* do many things [IDI] *that please God*, *some do even more things that please God, and some do very many things that please God*.”

Matthew 13:24-30

THEME: *Jesus told a parable about wheat and weeds.*

²⁴ Jesus also told the crowd another parable, *by which he tried to explain that although God [MTY/EUP] is a king, he will not immediately judge and punish all the wicked people.* Jesus said, “God is like a landowner who sent his servants to sow good wheat seed in his field. ²⁵While those servants were sleeping *and not watching the field*, an enemy of the landowner came and scattered weed seeds in the midst of the wheat. Then he left. ²⁶After *the seeds* sprouted and the green plants grew, the heads of grain began to form. But the weeds also grew. ²⁷So the servants of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, you [RHQ] gave us good seeds and those are the ones we [RHQ] planted in your field. So where did the weeds come from?’ ²⁸The landowner said to them, ‘My enemy did this.’ His servants said to him, ‘So, do you want us to pull up the weeds and put them in a pile?’ ²⁹He said to them, ‘No, do not do that, because you might pull up some of the wheat at the same time. ³⁰Let the wheat and the weeds grow together until harvest time. At that time I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather the weeds, tie them into bundles to be burned. Then gather the wheat and put it into my barns.’”

Matthew 13:31-33

THEME: *Jesus illustrated the effects of people letting God rule their lives.*

³¹ Jesus also told this parable: “The number of (OR, God’s influence in the lives of) people whose lives God rules over will continue to grow. It is very much like mustard seeds grow after a man plants them in his field. ³²Although mustard seeds are among the smallest of all the seeds that people plant, here in Israel they become large plants. When the plants have fully grown, they are larger than the other garden plants. They become shrubs that are large enough for the birds to build nests in their branches.”

³³ Jesus also told this parable: “The way people who let God [MTY/EUP] rule their lives [MET] can influence the world is like yeast that a woman mixed with about fifty pounds of flour. That small amount of yeast made the whole batch of dough swell up.”

Matthew 13:34-35

THEME: *Jesus’ use of parables fulfilled a prophecy in Scripture.*

³⁴ Jesus told the crowd parables to teach them all these things. When he spoke [HYP] to them he habitually used such illustrations. ³⁵By doing that, he fulfilled what God told one of the prophets to write long ago,

I will speak [MTY] in parables; I will tell parables to teach what I have kept secret since I created the world.

Matthew 13:36-43

THEME: *Jesus explained the parable about wheat and weeds. The wheat represents those who obey God, and the weeds represents those who disobey God. The reaping represents judgment.*

³⁶ After Jesus dismissed the crowds, he went into the house. Then the disciples approached him and said, “Explain to us the parable about the weeds that grew in the wheat field.” ³⁷He answered, “The one who sows the good seed represents me, the one who came from heaven. ³⁸The field represents this world [MTY], where people live. The seeds that grew well represent the people who let God rule their lives [MET]. The weeds represent the people who do what the devil, the Evil One, tells them to do. ³⁹The enemy who sowed the weed seeds represents the devil. The time when the reapers will harvest the grain represents the time when the world will end. The reapers represent the angels. ⁴⁰The weeds are gathered and burned. {The reapers gather the weeds. Then they burn them.} That represents the judging of people, which God will do when the world will end. It will be like this: ⁴¹I, the one who came from heaven, will send my angels and they will gather from everywhere the people who cause others to quit believing in me [MET] and all those who disobey God’s commands. ⁴²They will throw those people into the fires of hell. There they will weep and grind their teeth because of the great pain that they are suffering. ⁴³God’s brightness will shine on the people who have lived as he wants them to. It will shine on them as brightly as the sun shines. It will shine on them in the place where God, their Father, rules over them. If you want to understand this [MTY], you should think carefully about what I have just said.”

Matthew 13:44-50

THEME: *Jesus illustrated the value of letting God rule our lives.*

⁴⁴ “What people do who begin to allow God [MTY/EUP] to rule their lives is like what a certain man did to acquire a treasure. A treasure was hidden in a field by someone {Someone hid a treasure in a field and never dug it up again}. When another man found it, he hid it by burying it again in order that no one else would find it. Being very happy that he had found something very valuable, he went and sold all his possessions to obtain money to buy the field the treasure was in. He then went and bought the field, and so he was able to acquire that treasure.

⁴⁵ “Also, what people do who begin to allow God [MTY/EUP] to rule their lives is like what a merchant did who was looking for good quality pearls to buy. ⁴⁶When he found one very costly pearl that was for sale, he sold all his possessions to acquire enough money to buy that pearl. Then he went and bought it.

⁴⁷“What God [MTY/EUP] will do to people who falsely say that they are letting him rule their lives is like what certain fishermen did with the fish they caught in a lake, using a large net. They caught all classes of fish, both useful and worthless fish. ⁴⁸When the net was full, the fishermen pulled it up onto the shore. Then they sat there and put the useful fish into buckets, and threw the worthless ones away. ⁴⁹What they did in separating the good fish from the bad ones is like what will happen to people when the world ends. The angels will come to where God is judging people and will separate the wicked people from the righteous ones. ⁵⁰They will throw the wicked people into the fire in hell. And those wicked people will weep and gnash their teeth because of the intense pain they are suffering.”

Matthew 13:51-52

THEME: *Jesus illustrated the value of understanding his parables.*

⁵¹ Then Jesus asked us, “Do you understand all these parables I have told you?” We said to him, ⁵²“Yes, we understand them.” Then he said to us, “Because you understand all these parables, you will understand the following parable: You, along with all others, will teach people what you heard me say about God ruling people’s lives. You will add that to what you formerly learned. You will be like a manager of a household who takes both new things and old things out of his storage room.”

Matthew 13:53-58

THEME: *Jesus did not do many miracles in Nazareth because people there rejected him as the Messiah.*

⁵³When Jesus had finished telling these parables, he took us and left that area. ⁵⁴We went to Nazareth, his hometown. <On the Sabbath/On the Jewish rest day> he began to teach the people in the Jewish worship house. The result was that the people there were astonished. But some said, “This man is just an ordinary person like us! So how is it that he knows so much and understands so much [RHQ]? And how is it that he is able to do such miracles [RHQ]? ⁵⁵ <He is just the son of the carpenter! Isn’t he just the son of the carpenter that lived here?> [RHQ] His mother is Mary, and his younger brothers are James, Joseph, Simon and Judas [RHQ]! ⁵⁶ <And his sisters also live here in our town./Do not his sisters live in our town?> [RHQ] So how is he able to do all these miracles?” ⁵⁷The people were unable to accept that he was the Messiah. So Jesus said to them, “People honor me and other prophets everywhere else we go, but in our hometowns we are not honored, and even our own families do not honor us!” ⁵⁸ Jesus did not perform many miracles there because the people did not believe that he was the Messiah.

Matthew 14:1-13a

THEME: *Herod had John the Baptizer imprisoned and then killed because John criticized Herod for marrying his brother’s wife.*

14 ¹ During that time Herod Antipas, the ruler, heard reports about Jesus performing miracles. ² He said to his servants: “That must be John the Baptizer. He must have risen from the dead, and that is why he has power to perform miracles.” ³ ⁴ The reason Herod thought that was this: Herod had married Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, while Philip was still living. So John had been saying to him, “What you did by marrying your brother’s wife while your brother is still alive is against God’s law!” Then, to please Herodias, Herod told his soldiers to arrest John. They bound him with chains and put him in prison. ⁵ Herod wanted to have John executed, but he was afraid that the people who had accepted what John taught would riot if he did that, because they believed that John was a prophet.

⁶ But when Herod gave a party to celebrate his birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced for his guests. This pleased Herod. ⁷ So he promised to give her whatever she asked, and he asked God to punish him if he did not do what he had promised. ⁸ So Herodias’ daughter went and asked her mother what to ask for. Her mother told her to ask for John the Baptizer’s head. So her daughter went back and said to Herod: “Cut off the head of John the Baptizer and please bring it here on a platter so that my mother can know for sure that he is dead!” ⁹ The king was distressed because he now knew he should not have made that promise to her. But because he had made an oath in front of his guests when he made that promise, and he did not want them to think that he would not do what he had promised, he commanded that the girl be given what she requested. ¹⁰ He sent the executioner to go to the prison and to cut off John’s head. ¹¹ The executioner did that, and put John’s head on a platter and gave it to the girl. Then the girl took it to her mother. ¹² John’s disciples then went to the prison, took John’s body and buried it, and they reported to Jesus what had happened. ¹³ After Jesus heard that, he took just us disciples with him and we went by boat on Galilee lake to an uninhabited place.

Matthew 14:13b-21

THEME: *Jesus miraculously fed more than 5000 people.*

After the crowds heard that we had gone to an uninhabited place, they left their towns and followed him, walking along the shore. ¹⁴ When Jesus came to the shore, he saw a large crowd of people who had gathered there, waiting for him. He felt sorry for them, and he healed those among them who were sick.

¹⁵ When it was nearly evening, we disciples came to him and said, “This is a place where nobody lives, and it is very late. Dismiss the crowds so that they can go into the nearby towns. Have them do that so that they can buy food for

themselves.”¹⁶ But Jesus said to us, “They do not need to leave to *get food*. *Instead, you yourselves* give them something to eat!”¹⁷ We said to him, “But we have only five loaves of bread and two *cooked* fish here!”¹⁸ He said to us, “Bring them to me!”¹⁹ He told the people *who had gathered there* to sit on the grass. Then he took the five flat loaves and the two fish. He looked up toward heaven, thanked *God for them*, and broke *them into pieces*. Then he gave them to us disciples, and we distributed them to the crowd.²⁰ *All the people in the crowd* ate until they had enough to eat. Then we *disciples* gathered the pieces that were left over, *and* we filled twelve baskets with them.²¹ Those who ate were about five thousand men. *We did not count* the women and children!

Matthew 14:22-33

THEME: *Jesus walked on Galilee lake, and then Peter tried to do the same.*

²² Right after that happened, Jesus told us disciples to get in the boat and to go ahead of him further around *the lake* while he dismissed the crowds.²³ After he dismissed them, he went up into the hills to pray by himself. When it was evening, he was *still* there alone.²⁴ *By this time* we were already many hundred meters from the shore. The boat was being severely tossed by the waves {The waves were severely tossing the boat} because the wind was *blowing* against it.²⁵ *Then Jesus came down from the hills to the lake*. Some time between three and six o'clock in the morning he walked on the water toward our *boat*.²⁶ When we disciples saw him walking on the water, we thought that he must be a ghost. We were terrified, and we screamed out because we were afraid.²⁷ Immediately Jesus said to us, “Cheer up! It is I. Do not be afraid!”²⁸ Peter said to him, “Lord, if it is you, tell me to walk on the water to you!”²⁹ Jesus said, “Come!” So Peter got out of the boat. He walked on the water toward Jesus.³⁰ But when Peter saw the *tossing waves* which the strong wind *caused*, he became afraid. He began to sink, and cried out, “Lord, save me!”³¹ Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and grabbed him. He said to Peter, “You only trust a little bit *in my power!* <Why did you doubt *that I could keep you from sinking?*?/You should not have doubted *that I could keep you from sinking!*> [RHQ]”³² Then Jesus and Peter got in the boat, and the wind *immediately* stopped blowing.³³ *All of us disciples* who were in the boat worshipped Jesus and said, “Truly you are the Son of God!”

Matthew 14:34-36

THEME: *Jesus healed many sick people in the Gennesaret region.*

³⁴ When we had gone further around *the lake in the boat*, we came to the shore at Gennesaret *town*.³⁵ The men of that area recognized Jesus. So they sent *people to inform those who lived* in that whole surrounding region [MTY] *that Jesus was in their area*. So the people brought to Jesus all the sick people *who lived in that region*.³⁶ *The sick people* kept begging him to allow them to touch *him* or just to touch the edge of his robe *so that they would be healed*. And all who touched *him or his robe* were healed {he healed all who touched *him or his clothing*}.

Matthew 15:1-9

THEME: *Jesus rebuked the religious leaders for ignoring God's commands in order to uphold their own religious traditions.*

15¹ Then *some* Pharisees and men who taught the *Jewish* laws came from Jerusalem *to talk* to Jesus. They said,² “<We think it is disgusting that your disciples disobey the traditions of our ancestors!/Why do your disciples disobey *what our ancestors wrote down and our elders taught us?*> [RHQ] They do not *perform the proper ritual* of washing their hands before they eat!”³ Jesus answered them, “<What is really disgusting is that **you** refuse to obey God's commands *just* so that you can follow what your ancestors taught you!/Why do **you** refuse to obey what God commanded *people to do, just* so that you can follow your own traditions?> [RHQ]”⁴ God gave these *two* commands: ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and ‘People who speak evil about their father or mother must be executed.’⁵ But **you** tell people, ‘You can say to your father or mother, “What I was going to give to you *to help provide for you, I have now promised* to give to God.”’⁶ And if you do that, you think that you do not need to give anything to your parents. In *that way, by teaching people* your traditions, you disregard what God commanded.⁷ You only pretend to be good! Isaiah prophesied accurately about you *also when he quoted what God said about your ancestors*. *God said*,⁸ “These people talk *as if they honor me* [MTY], but they do not think about honoring me at all [MET].⁹ It is useless for them to worship me, because they teach what people thought up *as if I myself had commanded it.*”

Matthew 15:10-11

THEME: *Jesus said that people are defiled by the words that come out of their mouths, rather than by any kind of food that they eat.*

¹⁰ Then Jesus *again* summoned the crowd to come *nearer* to him. Then he said to them, “Listen to *what I am about to tell you*, and *try to understand it*.¹¹ Nothing that a person puts into his mouth *to eat* causes *God to consider* that person to be unacceptable. Instead, it is *the words* that come out of people's mouths [SYN] that cause *God to reject them.*”

Matthew 15:12-20

THEME: *Jesus explained that people's inner thoughts are what make them unacceptable to God.*

¹² Later we disciples went to Jesus and said, "Do you know that the Pharisees heard what you said, and as a result they felt offended [RHQ]?" ¹³ Then, *to teach us what God would do to the Pharisees*, Jesus told us *this parable*: "My Father in heaven will get rid of all those who teach things that are contrary to his truth, just like a farmer gets rid of plants that he did not plant by pulling them up along with their roots [MET]. ¹⁴ Do not pay any attention to *the Pharisees*. They do not help people who do not know God's truth to understand it, just like blind guides do not help blind people to perceive where they should go [MET]. If a blind person tries to lead another blind person, they will both fall into a hole [MET]. Similarly, both the Pharisees and their disciples will end up in hell."

¹⁵ Peter said to Jesus, "Explain to us the parable about what a person eats." ¹⁶ He replied to them, "I am disappointed that even you, who should understand what I teach, still do not understand! Why is it that even you who should understand what I teach, still do not understand?" [RHQ] ¹⁷ "You ought to understand that all food that people eat enters their stomachs, and later the refuse passes out of their bodies. Can not you understand that all food that people eat enters their stomachs and later the refuse passes out of their bodies?" [RHQ] *Because food does not alter what we think and desire, what we eat does not cause God to consider that we are unacceptable to him.* ¹⁸ You should know that what comes out of people's mouths, meaning everything that they say [SYN], comes from their inner beings/hearts. Many of the things that they say cause God to consider them to be unacceptable to him. ¹⁹ It is people's innermost beings that cause them to think things that are evil, to murder people, to commit adultery, to commit other sexual sins, to steal things, to testify falsely, and to speak evil about others. ²⁰ It is these actions that cause God to consider people to be unacceptable to him. To eat with unwashed hands does not cause God to consider people unacceptable to him."

Matthew 15:21-28

THEME: *Jesus healed a non-Jewish woman's daughter after testing the mother's faith in him.*

²¹ After Jesus took us and left Galilee district, we went into the region where the cities of Tyre and Sidon are located. ²² A woman from the group of people called Canaanites who live in that region came to the place where Jesus was staying. She kept shouting to him, "Lord, you are the descendant of King David, you are the Messiah! Have pity on me and my daughter! She is suffering very much because a demon controls her." ²³ But Jesus did not answer her at all. We disciples came to him, and knowing that the woman was not a Jew, we said to him, "Tell her to leave because she keeps bothering us by yelling behind us!" ²⁴ But Jesus said to her, "I have been sent {God has sent me} to help only the Israelite people at this time [SYN]. They are like sheep that have gotten lost [MET] because they do not know the way to heaven." ²⁵ But she came closer to Jesus and knelt down in front of him to worship him. She pled, "Lord/Sir, help me!" ²⁶ Then, to suggest to her that he needed to help the Jews first and not the non-Jews, whom the Jews called dogs, he told her, "It is not good for someone to take food that has been prepared for the children and throw it to the little dogs." ²⁷ But to show that she believed that non-Jews could also receive help from God, the woman said to Jesus, "Lord/Sir, what you say is correct, but even the little dogs eat the crumbs that fall to the floor when their masters sit at their tables and eat!" ²⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, because you believe firmly in me, I will heal your daughter as you desire!" At that moment the demon left her daughter, and she became well.

Matthew 15:29-31

THEME: *Jesus healed many people on a hillside near Galilee lake.*

²⁹ After Jesus, along with us disciples, departed from that area, we went back to Galilee lake and walked along it. Then Jesus climbed the hill near there and sat down to teach the people. ³⁰ Crowds kept coming to him for the next two days and brought lame, crippled, and blind people, those who were unable to talk, and many others who had various sicknesses. They laid them in front of Jesus so that he would heal them [SYN]. And he healed them. ³¹ The crowd saw him heal people who could not talk, crippled people, lame people, and blind people, and they were amazed. They said, "Praise God who rules over us who live in Israel!"

Matthew 15:32-39

THEME: *Jesus miraculously fed over 4,000 people.*

³² Then Jesus called us disciples to him and said to us, "This crowd of people has been with me for three days and have nothing left to eat. I feel sorry for them. I do not want to send them away while they are still hungry, because if I did that, they might faint on the way home." ³³ We disciples said to him, "In this place where nobody lives, we can not possibly obtain enough food to feed such a large crowd! How can we obtain a large enough amount of food to feed such a large crowd?" [RHQ] ³⁴ Jesus asked us, "How many small loaves do you have?" We said to him, "We have seven small loaves and a few cooked fish." ³⁵ He told the people to sit on the ground. ³⁶ Then he took the seven small loaves and the fish. After he thanked God for them, he broke them into pieces, and he kept giving them to us. Then we kept distributing them to the crowd. ³⁷⁻³⁸ Because Jesus made the food multiply miraculously, all those people ate and had plenty to satisfy them. There were four thousand men who ate, but no one counted the women and the children who also ate. Then we disciples collected the pieces of food that were left over, and we filled seven large baskets with them.

³⁹ After Jesus dismissed the crowd, he, *along with us*, got in the boat, and we sailed *around the lake* to the region called Magadan.

Matthew 16:1-4

THEME: *Jesus again told the religious leaders that the only miracle that he would do for them was one like God did for Jonah.*

16 ¹ Some Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and asked him to perform a miracle that would prove that God [EUP] had sent him. ² He answered them, “In this country, in the evening you say, ‘It will be good weather tomorrow, because the sky is red.’ ³ Early in the morning you say, ‘It will be stormy weather today, because the sky is red, and dark clouds have formed.’ You understand how to predict the weather by looking at the sky, but you cannot seem to look at what is happening now and by that understand what God is doing. ⁴ You evil people have seen me perform miracles but you do not faithfully worship God [MET]. You want to see me perform a miracle that would prove that God has sent me. But God will enable you to see only one miracle. It will be like what happened [MET] to Jonah, the prophet, who was inside a huge fish for three days and then came out of it to live again.” Then Jesus left them and sailed away, *along with us disciples*.

Matthew 16:5-12

THEME: *Jesus rebuked the disciples for worrying about not having enough food.*

⁵ We forgot to take bread when we sailed to another edge of the lake. ⁶ Then Jesus said to us, “Beware that you do not accept the yeast [MET] that the Pharisees and Sadducees distribute.” ⁷ Then, not realizing that he was speaking figuratively, we said to one another, “He must have said that because we forgot to bring any bread!” ⁸ Because Jesus knew what we were saying, he said to us, “<I am disappointed that you are discussing among yourselves, thinking that it was because you did not bring any bread that I talked about the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees./Why are you discussing among yourselves thinking that it was because you did not bring any bread that I talked about the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees?> [RHQ] You believe only a little what I am able to do for you. ⁹ <You should understand that I can continue to do miracles to provide for what you need./Do you not yet understand that I can provide miraculously for you if you need food?> [RHQ] Do you not remember that five thousand people ate when I multiplied the five small loaves and the two fish? And after everyone had enough to eat, you collected twelve baskets of leftover pieces [RHQ]! ¹⁰ Do you not remember [RHQ] that four thousand people ate when I multiplied the seven small loaves and a few fish? And after everyone had enough to eat, you collected seven large baskets of leftover pieces! ¹¹ <You should have understood that I was not speaking about real bread that contains yeast./Why have you not understood that I was not speaking about real bread that contains yeast?> [RHQ] What I was saying was that you should not accept what the Pharisees and Sadducees say, because it would affect you like yeast affects [MET] dough.” ¹² Then we understood that he was not talking about the yeast that is in bread. Instead, he was talking about the wrong teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Matthew 16:13-20

THEME: *Jesus commented on the implications of Peter’s recognition of Jesus being the Messiah.*

¹³ When Jesus came with us disciples to the region near Caesarea Philippi town, he asked us, “Who do people say that I, the one who came from heaven, really am?” ¹⁴ We answered, “Some people say that you are John the Baptizer, who has come back to life again. Others say that you are the prophet Elijah, who has returned from heaven as God promised. Still others say that you are the prophet Jeremiah or one of the other prophets who lived long ago, who has come back to life again.” ¹⁵ Jesus said to us, “What about you? Who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter said to him, “You are the Messiah! You are the Son of the all-powerful God.” ¹⁷ Then Jesus said to him, “Simon, son of Jonah, God is pleased with you. What you just said was not [SYN] revealed to you by any human. Instead, it was my Father who lives in heaven who revealed this to you. ¹⁸ I will also tell you this: You are Peter, which means rock. You are like a rock. What you and your fellow apostles teach (OR, what you do) will be like a foundation on which I will create congregations of people who believe in me. And the demons, [PRS] who live where the dead people who lived evil lives are, will not be able to come and prevent [MET] me from doing that.” ¹⁹ Then, speaking to all of us, he said, “I will enable you (pl) to have authority [MTY] over the groups of people over whose lives God rules. Whatever you forbid regarding those people [MTY], it will have been forbidden by God. Whatever you permit [MET] regarding them, it will have been permitted by God.” ²⁰ Then Jesus warned us disciples strongly not to tell anyone at that time that he is the Messiah.

Matthew 16:21-23

THEME: *Jesus began to teach the disciples about his coming death and resurrection.*

²¹ From that time Jesus began to teach us disciples that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem city. There the ruling elders, the chief priests, and the men who taught the Jewish laws would cause him to suffer and be killed {die}. Then on the third day after that, he would become alive again. ²² Because Peter assumed that the Messiah would not suffer and die, he took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him for talking about suffering and dying. He said, “Lord, may God never permit that to happen to you! That must certainly not happen!” ²³ Then Jesus turned to look at Peter, and he said to him, “Stop talking to me like that [MTY]! Stop saying what Satan [MET] would say, and stop trying to prevent from happening what

God has planned! You are a hindrance to me, because you are not thinking like God thinks. Instead, you are thinking like people think!"

Matthew 16:24-28

THEME: Jesus taught the disciples more about what they would face as his disciples, and about his coming again.

²⁴ Then Jesus said to *us* disciples, "If any one of you wants to be my disciple, you must not do *only* what you yourself want to do. You must be willing to *let people hurt you and disgrace you. That is like what they do to criminals whom they force to carry a cross [MET] to the place where the criminals will be executed. That is what anyone who wants to be my disciple must do.* ²⁵ You must do that, because those who try to save their lives by *denying that they belong to me when people want to kill them for believing in me* will not live *eternally*, but those who are killed *because of being my disciples* will live *with God eternally.* ²⁶ People *might* get everything they want in this world, but *if they do not become my disciples, they would really be gaining nothing because they would not get eternal life! what would they gain if they do not become my disciples and thus do not get eternal life?*» [RHQ] *«There is absolutely nothing that people can give to God that would enable them to gain eternal life. What can people give to God that could enable them to gain eternal life?»* [MTY, RHQ] ²⁷ *Listen carefully: I, the one who came from heaven, will leave this earth, but I will return, and the angels of heaven will accompany me. At that time I will have the glorious radiance that my Father has, and I will reward everyone according to what they did when they were living on earth.* ²⁸ Listen carefully! Some of you who are here now will see *me*, the one who came from heaven, when I return to rule. You will see this before you die!"

Matthew 17:1-8

THEME: Jesus' appearance changed while Moses and Elijah talked with him on a mountain.

17 ¹ A week after Jesus said that, he took Peter, James, and John, the *younger* brother of James, and led them up a high mountain where they were away from other people. ² *While they were there, the three disciples saw that Jesus' appearance was changed. His face shone like the sun, and his clothing shone and became as brilliant as light.* ³ Suddenly Moses and Elijah, *who were important prophets many years ago*, appeared and started talking with him. ⁴ Peter saw them and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is wonderful for us to be here! If you want *me to*, I will make three shelters—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵ While Peter was speaking, a bright cloud *appeared and covered them. They heard God speaking about Jesus from inside the cloud. He said to them, "This is my Son. I love him. He pleases me very much. So you must listen to him!"* ⁶ When the three disciples heard *God speaking*, they were exceedingly afraid. *As a result*, they fell prostrate on the ground. ⁷ But Jesus went to them and touched them *and said to them, "Stand up! Do not be afraid anymore!"* ⁸ And when they looked up [MTY], they saw that Jesus was the only one *who was still there.*

Matthew 17:9-13

THEME: Jesus explained that John the Baptizer fulfilled the prophecy about Elijah returning.

⁹ When they were walking down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Do not tell anyone what you saw *on the mountain top until God has caused me*, the one who has come from heaven, to become alive again after I die." ¹⁰ *Those three disciples had just seen Elijah and he did not do anything to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah*, so they asked Jesus, "If *what you say is true*, why do the men who teach the Jewish laws say that it is necessary for Elijah to come *back to earth before the Messiah comes?*" ¹¹ Jesus answered them, "It is true that *God promised that Elijah would come to prepare many [HYP] people for the Messiah's coming.* ¹² But note this: Elijah's *representative* has already come *and our leaders have seen him*, but they did not recognize him as *the one who would come before the Messiah*. Instead, they treated him *badly*, just like they desired. And those same rulers will soon treat *me*, the one who came from heaven, in the same manner." ¹³ Then the three disciples understood that *when he was talking about Elijah*, he was referring to John the Baptizer.

Matthew 17:14-20

THEME: Jesus healed an epileptic boy, and he rebuked his disciples for not having enough faith to do miracles.

¹⁴ When *Jesus and the three disciples* returned to the *rest of us disciples* and to the crowd that had gathered, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. ¹⁵ He said to him, "Sir/Lord, have mercy on my son and *heal him!* He has epilepsy and suffers very much. *Because of this illness*, he has fallen in the fire and in the water many times. ¹⁶ I brought him to your disciples *in order that they might heal him*, but they were not able to heal him." ¹⁷ Jesus responded by saying to everyone who had gathered there, "You who have seen how I help people do not believe that you can do anything! Your minds are distorted. How long do I have to be with you *before you are able to do what I do* [RHQ]? How long do I have to endure your *not believing* [RHQ]? Bring the boy here to me!" ¹⁸ When they brought the boy to Jesus, Jesus rebuked the demon that was causing the epilepsy. *As a result*, the demon came out of the boy, and the boy was healed from that time onward. ¹⁹ *Later, some of us disciples* approached Jesus. We asked him privately, "Why were *we(exc)* not able to expel the demon?" ²⁰ He answered us, "It is because you did not believe very much *in God's power*. Think about this: Mustard seeds are very small, but in this area they grow and produce large [MET] plants. Similarly, if your faith grows until you truly believe that God will

do what you ask him to, you will be able to do anything [LIT]! You *could even* say to this hill, 'Move from here to there!' and it would go *where you told it to go*.^c

Matthew 17:22-23

THEME: Jesus again predicted his death and resurrection.

²²When we disciples had gathered together in Galilee district, Jesus said to us, "I, the one who came from heaven, will soon be handed over {Someone will soon hand me, the one who came from heaven, over} to the authorities [SYN].²³ They will kill me. But God will cause me to become alive again on the third day *after I am killed*." When we heard that, we became very sad.

Matthew 17:24-27

THEME: Jesus arranged for a miracle so that Peter could pay the Temple tax.

²⁴When we came to Capernaum city, the men who collect taxes for the Temple approached Peter and said to him, "Your teacher pays the Temple tax, does he not?"²⁵ He answered them, "Yes, he does pay it." When we came into Jesus' house, before Peter began to talk about paying taxes, Jesus said to him, "Simon, from whom do you think rulers collect revenue or taxes? Do they collect taxes from the citizens of their own country, or from citizens of countries they have conquered?"²⁶ Peter answered him, "From citizens of other countries." Then Jesus said to him, "So citizens of their own country do not need to pay taxes.²⁷ But even though the Temple is mine, pay the tax for us so that the Temple tax collectors will not become angry with us. In order to get the money to pay it, go to the lake. Cast your fish line and hook, and take the first fish that you catch. When you open its mouth, you will find a silver coin that is worth enough to pay the tax for you and me. Take that coin and give it to the Temple tax collectors."

Matthew 18:1-5

THEME: Jesus showed that being great in God's sight means being as humble as a child.

18¹About that time we disciples approached Jesus and said, "Who among us will be the most important when God [MTY/EUP] makes you king?"² Jesus called a child to come, and he placed that child in our midst.³ He said, "Think about this: If you(pl) do not change the way you(pl) think and become as humble as little children, you(pl) will surely not go to the place where God [MTY/EUP] rules.⁴ The people who become as humble as this child or any child is, will be the most important people among those over whom God rules.⁵ Also, when those who, because they love me, welcome a child like this one, God considers that they are welcoming me."

Matthew 18:6-9

THEME: Jesus taught that we need to take severe measures to keep us from sinning when we are tempted.

⁶If you cause someone who believes in me to sin, even if it is someone who is socially unimportant like this little child, God will severely punish you. If a heavy stone were fastened around your neck and you were thrown into the deep waters of the sea, people would consider that you had been severely punished. But God will punish you more severely than that if you cause someone to sin!⁷ It will be terrible for those [MTY] who cause others to stop believing in me. God will punish them eternally. It is inevitable that there will be those who cause others to stop believing in me. But it will be horrible for everyone who does that.⁸ So, if you are wanting to use one of your hands or feet to sin, stop using that hand or foot! Even if you have to cut it off to avoid sinning, do it [MET]! It is good that you not sin and go where you will live with God eternally, even though while you are still here on earth you are maimed or lame and do not have a hand or a foot. But it is not good that you continue to have your two hands and two feet and do [MTY] the sinful things you want to, and as a result, you are thrown into hell, where there is eternal fire burning.⁹ If what you see you makes you want to sin, stop looking at those things! Even if you have to gouge out one of your eyes and throw it away to avoid sinning, do it [HYP]! It is good that you not sin and go where you will live with God eternally, even though while you are still here on earth you have only one eye. But it is not good that you continue to have your two eyes and do the sinful things you want to, and as a result, you are thrown {God throws you} into hell where there is eternal fire burning.

Matthew 18:10-14

THEME: Jesus taught that God is deeply concerned if even one person goes astray from him.

¹⁰"Make an effort that you(pl) do not despise even one of these children. I tell you(pl) truly that since the angels live in heaven in the presence of my Father, they will report to him if you mistreat the children.^d¹² What do you(pl) think you would do in the following situation? If you had one hundred sheep and one of them got lost, you would surely leave the ninety-

^c Some Greek manuscripts add v. 21, "But this kind of demon will leave only if you have first prayed and fasted."

^d Some Greek manuscripts add v. 11, "And I, the one who came from heaven, have come to save those who are on their way to hell."

nine sheep *that are* on the hill and go and search for the lost one [RHQ], wouldn't you? ¹³ If you found it, I affirm to you (*pl*) that you would rejoice very much. You would be happy that ninety-nine sheep did not stray away, but you would rejoice even more *because you had found* the sheep that had strayed away. ¹⁴ In the same way *that the shepherd does not want one of his sheep to stray away*, so God, your Father in heaven, does not want even one of these children to go to hell."

Matthew 18:15-20

THEME: *Jesus taught about what we should do if someone sins against us and about agreeing when we pray.*

¹⁵ "If a fellow believer sins *against you*, go to *him*, and when you two are alone, reprove him *for sinning against you*. If that person listens to you *and feels sorry that he has sinned against you*, you will have restored *your friendship with that person*. ¹⁶ If that person will not listen to you *nor feel sorry that he has sinned against you*, go get one or two other people *who will listen to what you both have to say*. Have them go with you so that *what is written {Moses wrote} in the Scriptures might happen: 'When one person accuses another in some matter, it should be confirmed by at least two or three people {at least two or three people should confirm it} before that person can be declared guilty {before they declare that person guilty}.'* ¹⁷ If the one who has sinned against you will not listen to them *or does not feel sorry that he has sinned against you*, tell that to the congregation so *that they can rebuke him*. If that person will not listen to the congregation *or feel sorry that he has sinned against you*, *exclude him from being a member of your congregation, just like you would exclude pagans, tax collectors, and others who do not believe in God and sin greatly.* ¹⁸ Keep this in mind: Whatever you decide on earth *about punishing or not punishing a member of your congregation* is what has also been decided by God in heaven {what God in heaven has also decided}. ¹⁹ Also note this: If *at least two of you who live here on earth agree together about whatever you ask God for [DOU], God, my Father who is in heaven, will give you what you ask for.* ²⁰ *This is true, because wherever at least two or three of you assemble because you believe in me [MTY], I am spiritually present with you. I will hear what you ask for and I will ask God to do it for you.*"

Matthew 18:21-35

THEME: *Jesus told a parable to illustrate the need for forgiving others.*

²¹ Then Peter approached Jesus and said to him, "How many times must I forgive a fellow believer who *keeps on sinning against me? If he keeps asking me to forgive him, must I forgive him* as many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "I tell you *that the number of times you must forgive someone is not just up to seven, but you must <forgive him 77 times/never stop forgiving him>.* ²³ *In order to illustrate why you should do this, I will tell you a story in which God [MTY/EUP], who cares for the people whose lives he rules over, is compared {I compare God, who cares for the people whose lives he rules over} to a king and his officials. That king told some of his servants that he wanted his officials to pay what they owed him. ²⁴ So those officials were brought to the king to settle their accounts with him. One of the officials who were brought owed the king several million dollars. ²⁵ But because he did not have enough money to pay what he owed, the king demanded that he, his wife, his children and all he possessed be sold to someone else and that the king be repaid with {receive} the money that was paid for them. ²⁶ Then that official, knowing that he did not have the money to pay that huge debt, fell on his knees in front of the king and he begged him saying, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you all of it, eventually.'* ²⁷ The king, *knowing that the official could never pay all that huge debt, felt sorry for him. So he canceled his debt and released him. ²⁸ Then this official went to another one of the king's officials who owed him a bit less than a year's wages. He grabbed him by the throat, started choking him, and said to him, 'Pay back what you owe me!' ²⁹ That official fell on his knees and begged him saying, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you all of it, eventually.'* ³⁰ But this official kept refusing to cancel that small debt that the man owed him. Instead, he *caused that official to be put in prison and to stay there until he could pay back all the money that he owed him. ³¹ When the other officials of the king learned that this had happened, they felt very distressed. So they went to the king and reported in detail what had happened. ³² Then the king summoned the official who had owed him several million dollars. He said to him, 'You wicked servant! I canceled that huge debt that you owed me because you begged me to do so! ³³ You should have been merciful and canceled your fellow official's debt, just like I was merciful to you and canceled your debt [RHQ]!' ³⁴ The king was very angry. He handed this official over to some jailers who would torture him severely until he paid all of the debt that he owed.' ³⁵ Then Jesus continued by saying, "That is what my Father in heaven will do to you if you do not feel merciful and sincerely forgive a fellow believer who sins against you."*

Matthew 19:1-12

THEME: *Jesus taught them God's view of divorce, and about abstaining from marriage to give more time to serve God.*

19 ¹ After Jesus had said that, he *took us* and left Galilee *district* and went to the part of Judea *district that is located on the east side of the Jordan River.* ² Large crowds followed him there, and he healed *the sick among them there.*

³ *Some Pharisees approached him and said to him, "Does our Jewish law permit a man to divorce his wife for any reason whatever?" They asked that in order to be able to criticize him, whether he answered "Yes" or "No."* ⁴ Jesus said to them, "Because you have read [RHQ] *the Scriptures, you should know that at the time God first created people, 'he made one man, and he made one woman to be that man's wife.'* ⁵ That explains why God said, 'When a man and woman marry, they should no longer live with their fathers and mothers. Instead, the two of them shall live together, and they shall become so closely united that they are like one person [MET].'⁶ Consequently, *although they functioned as two separate people*

before, they now become as if they were one person [MET]. Since that is true, a man must not separate from his wife whom God has joined to him, because it is God's plan for them to remain together."

⁷ The Pharisees then said to him, "If that is true, why did Moses command that a man who wanted to divorce his wife should give her a paper stating his reason for divorcing her, and then send her away?" ⁸ He said to them, "It was because your ancestors stubbornly wanted their own ways that Moses allowed them to divorce their wives, and you are no different from them. But when God first [MTY] created a man and a woman, he did not intend for them to separate. ⁹ I am telling you emphatically that because God considers that a marriage lasts until either the husband or the wife dies, he considers that any man who divorces his wife and marries another woman is committing adultery, unless his first wife has committed adultery." ¹⁰ We disciples said to him, "If that is true, it is better for men never to marry!" ¹¹ Then he said to us, "Not every man is able to accept this teaching. Only the men whom God enables to accept it are able to do so. ¹² There are men who do not marry because they are not able to have sexual relations because they have been sexually defective ever since they were born. There are other men who do not marry because they are unable to have sexual relations because they have been castrated {other men have made them that way}. There are other men who decide not to marry [MET] in order that they can serve God better and spend more time telling people about how God [MTY/EUP] wants to rule people's lives. You who are able to understand what I have said about marriage should accept it and obey it."

Matthew 19:13-15

THEME: Jesus rebuked the disciples for trying to prevent children from coming to him.

¹³ Then some children were brought {some people brought their children} to Jesus in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray for them. But we disciples scolded the people for bringing their children to Jesus because we thought that Jesus did not want to take the time to be with children. ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw us scolding them, he said to us, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them! It is people who are humble and trusting like they are, who can experience [MTY/EUP] God's rule in their lives." ¹⁵ Jesus then laid his hands on the children and asked God to bless them. Then he left there.

Matthew 19:16-22

THEME: A rich young man went away sad because Jesus told him to sell all his possessions.

¹⁶ As Jesus was walking along, a young man approached him and said to him, "Teacher, what good deeds must I do in order to live with God eternally?" ¹⁷ Jesus said to him, "Consider what you are implying about who I am when you ask me about what is good. Do you realize what you are implying about who I am when you ask me about that which is good?" [RHQ] Only one being is good and really knows what is good. That being is God. But in order to answer your question about desiring to live with God eternally, I will say to you, 'Keep the commandments that God gave Moses.'" ¹⁸ The man asked Jesus, "Which commandments must I keep?" Jesus answered him, "Do not murder anyone, do not commit adultery, do not steal things, do not testify falsely, ¹⁹ honor your father and your mother, and love people you come in contact with as much as you love yourself." ²⁰ Thinking that he might not be able to live with God eternally even though he had kept those commandments, the young man said to Jesus, "I have always obeyed all those commandments. What else must I do in order to live with God eternally?" ²¹ Jesus said to him, "If you desire to be all that God intends you to be, go home, sell everything that you have and give the money to poor people. The result will be that you will have spiritual riches in heaven. Then come and be my disciple!" ²² When the young man heard those words, he went away feeling sad, because he was very rich and did not want to give away everything he owned.

Matthew 19:23-30

THEME: Jesus taught how difficult it is for rich people to let God rule their lives, but there are rewards for those who leave family and possessions for his sake.

²³ Then Jesus said to us disciples, "Keep this in mind: It is very difficult for rich people to decide to let God [MTY/EUP] rule their lives. ²⁴ Note this also: It is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. It is almost as difficult [HYP] for rich people to decide to let God rule their lives." ²⁵ When we disciples heard this, we became exceedingly astounded. We thought that rich people were the ones whom God blesses the most. So we said to him, "If that is so, it does not seem likely that anyone will be saved! Who then will God will save?" [RHQ] ²⁶ When Jesus heard us say that, he looked intently at us, and then he said to us, "Yes, it is impossible for people to save themselves. But God can save them, because God is able to do anything!" ²⁷ Then Peter said to him, "You know that we(exc) have left everything behind and we have become your disciples. So what benefit will we get for doing that?" ²⁸ Jesus said to us, "Keep this in mind: You will get many benefits. When God makes the new earth and when I, the one who came from heaven, sit on my magnificent throne, those of you who have accompanied me will each sit on a throne, and you will judge the people of the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ God will reward those who, because of being my disciples, have left behind a house or plot of ground, their brothers, their sisters, their father, their mother, their children, or any other family [MTY] members. God will give them a hundred times as many benefits as they have given up. And they will live with God eternally. ³⁰ But many people who consider themselves to be important now will be unimportant at that future time, and many people who consider themselves to be unimportant now will be important at that future time."

Matthew 20:1-16

THEME: Jesus told a parable to illustrate how God will reward those who serve him.

20 ¹*In order to illustrate how God rewards people, I will compare the way God [MTY/EUP] rules his people with what the owner of an estate did. Early in the morning the ruler of the estate went to where people who wanted work gathered. He went there to hire laborers to work in his vineyard. ²He promised the men whom he hired that he would pay them the standard wage for working one day. Then he sent them to his vineyards. ³At nine o'clock that same morning he went back to the market. There he saw more men who did not have work. ⁴He said to them, 'Go to my vineyard as other men have done, and work there. I will pay you whatever is a just wage.' So they also went to his vineyard and began to work. ⁵At noon and at three o'clock he again went to the market and found other laborers whom he promised to pay a fair wage. ⁶At five o'clock he went to the market again and saw other men standing there who were not working. He said to them, 'Why are you standing here all day and not working?' ⁷They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'I will hire you. Go to my vineyard as other men have done, and work there.' So they went.*

⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Tell the men to come so that you can give them their wages. First, pay the men who started working last, and pay the men last who started working first.' ⁹The manager paid that standard wage to each of the men who did not start working until five o'clock in the afternoon. ¹⁰When the men who had begun working early in the morning went to get their wages, they thought that they would receive more than the standard wage. But they also received only the standard wage. ¹¹So they complained to the owner of the vineyard because they thought their payment was unfair. ¹²They said to him, 'You are not being fair! The men who started working after all of the rest of us started worked for only one hour! You have paid them the same wage as you paid us! But we worked hard all day [IDM], including working in the hottest part of the day!' ¹³The owner of the vineyard said to one of those who complained, 'Friend, I did not treat you unfairly. You agreed with me to work the whole day for the standard wage [RHQ]. ¹⁴Stop complaining to me! Take your wage and go! I desire to give the same wage that I gave you to the men who began working after all of you had begun working. ¹⁵I certainly have a right to spend my money as I desire [RHQ], including paying those laborers what I desire to pay them. <You should not be envious about my being generous! Are you angry [MET] because I am generous?> [RHQ]' ¹⁶Then Jesus said to us, "Similarly, God will reward well some people who seem to be less important now, and he will not reward some people who seem to be more important now."

Matthew 20:17-19

THEME: For the third time Jesus predicted his death and resurrection.

¹⁷When Jesus was walking on the road up to Jerusalem, along with us twelve disciples, he took us to a place by ourselves in order that he could talk to us privately. Then he said to us, ¹⁸"Listen carefully! We are now going up to Jerusalem. While we are there, someone will enable the chief priests and the men who teach the Jewish laws to seize me, the one who came from heaven, and they will put me on trial. They will condemn me and say that I should be killed {the authorities should kill me}. ¹⁹Then they will put me in the hands of non-Jews so that they can make fun of me, whip me, and kill me by nailing me to a cross. But on the third day after that, God will cause me to live again."

Matthew 20:20-28

THEME: Jesus taught that greatness in God's sight means humbly serving others as Jesus did.

²⁰Then the mother of James and John brought her two sons to Jesus. She bowed down before Jesus and asked him to do her a favor. ²¹Jesus said to her, "What do you want me to do for you?" She said to him, "Permit these two sons of mine to sit next to you (OR, Permit these two sons of mine to sit next to you at your right side and at your left side) and rule with you [MTY] when you become king." ²²Jesus said to her and her sons, "You do not understand what you are asking for. Can you suffer like I am about to suffer [IDM]?" James and John answered him, "Yes, we are able to do that." ²³Then Jesus said to them, "Yes, you will suffer as I will suffer [IDM]. But I am not the one who chooses the ones who will sit next to me and rule with me. God, my Father, will give those places [MTY] to the ones whom he appoints."

²⁴When we ten other disciples heard what James and John had requested, we became angry with them because we also wanted to rule with Jesus in the highest positions. ²⁵So Jesus called all of us together and said to us, "You know that those who rule the non-Jews enjoy showing them that they are powerful. Their chief rulers enjoy commanding the people under them. ²⁶You should not be like them. On the contrary, everyone among you who wants God to consider him great must become like a servant for the rest of you. ²⁷And everyone among you who wants God to consider him to be the most important must become like a slave for the rest of you. ²⁸You should imitate me. Even though I am the one who came from heaven, I did not come to be served {in order that people would serve me}. On the contrary, I came in order to serve others and to [IDM] allow myself to be killed {other people to kill me}, so that my dying would be like a payment to rescue many people from being punished for their sins." [MTY]

Matthew 20:29-34

THEME: *Jesus healed two blind men.*

²⁹ As we were leaving Jericho city, a large crowd of people followed us. ³⁰ As we walked along, we saw two blind men sitting alongside the road. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they yelled to him, "Lord, Descendant of King David, you are the Messiah! Take pity on us!" ³¹ People in the crowd scolded them and told them to be quiet. But the blind men yelled even louder, "Lord, Descendant of King David, you are the Messiah! Have pity on us!" ³² Jesus stopped and called them to come to him. Then he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³³ They said to him, "Lord, heal our eyes [IDM] so that we can see!" ³⁴ Jesus felt sorry for them and touched their eyes. Immediately they were able to see, and they went with Jesus.

Matthew 21:1-11

THEME: *Jesus entered Jerusalem humbly on a donkey, but with great acclaim by the crowd.*

21 ¹ As we approached Jerusalem, we came near Bethphage village, near Olive Tree Hill. Jesus said to two of his disciples, "Go to the village just ahead of you. As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey and her foal that are {someone has} tied up. Untie them and bring them here to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you about your doing that, tell him, 'The Lord needs them.' He will then allow you to lead them away." ⁴ When all this happened, what was written by a prophet {what a prophet wrote about} was fulfilled {happened}. The prophet wrote, "Tell the people who live in Jerusalem [SYN], 'Look! Your king is coming to you! He will come humbly. He will show that he is humble, because he will be riding on a colt, the offspring of a donkey.'"

⁶ So the two disciples went and did what Jesus told them to do. ⁷ They brought the donkey and its colt to Jesus. They placed their cloaks on them to make something for him to sit on. Then Jesus mounted the colt and sat on the cloaks. ⁸ Then a large crowd spread some of their clothing on the road, and other people cut off branches from palm trees and spread them on the road. They did those things to decorate the road in order to honor Jesus. ⁹ The crowds that walked in front of him and those who walked behind him were shouting things like, "Praise the Messiah, the descendant of King David!" "May the Lord God bless this one who comes as God's representative and with God's authority [MTY]." "Praise God, who is in the highest heaven!" ¹⁰ As Jesus entered Jerusalem, a crowd of people [MTY] from all over the city became excited and were saying, "Why are they honoring this man like that?" ¹¹ The crowd that was already following him said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee!"

Matthew 21:12-17

THEME: *Jesus chased buyers and sellers from the temple, and he rebuked the Jewish leaders for objecting to children praising him.*

¹² Then Jesus went into the Temple courtyard and chased out all of those who were buying and selling things there. He also overturned the tables of those who were giving Temple tax money in exchange for Roman coins, and he overturned the seats of those who were selling pigeons for sacrifices. ¹³ Then he said to them, "It is {<Jeremiah/A prophet> has} written in the Scriptures that God said, 'I want my house to be called a place where people pray', but you bandits have made it [MET] your hideout!"

¹⁴ After that, many blind people and lame people came to Jesus in the temple in order that he would heal them, and he healed them. ¹⁵ The high priests and the men who taught the people the Jewish laws saw the wonderful deeds that Jesus did. They also saw and heard the children shouting in the Temple, "We praise the Messiah, the descendant of King David!" They were indignant because they did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. ¹⁶ They thought that Jesus should not be allowing the children to say that, so they asked him, "How can you tolerate this [RHQ]? Do you hear what these children are shouting?" Then Jesus said to them, "Yes, I hear them, but if you remembered what you have read in the Scriptures about children praising me, you would know that God is pleased [RHQ] with them. The psalmist wrote, saying to God, 'You have taught infants and other children to praise you perfectly.'"

¹⁷ Then Jesus left the city. We disciples went with him to Bethany town, and we slept there that night.

Matthew 21:18-22

THEME: *Jesus taught the disciples a lesson from what happened to a fig tree.*

¹⁸ Early the next morning when we were returning to the city, Jesus was hungry. ¹⁹ He saw a fig tree near the road. So he went over to it to pick some figs to eat. But when he got close, he saw that there were no figs on the tree. There were only leaves on it. So to illustrate how God would punish the nation of Israel, he said to the fig tree, "May you never again produce figs!" As a result, the fig tree withered that night. ²⁰ The next day when we disciples saw what had happened to the tree, we marveled, and we said to Jesus, " <It is astonishing that the fig tree withered so quickly!/How is it that the fig tree dried up so quickly?> [RHQ] ²¹ Jesus said to us, "Think about this: If you believe that God has power to do what you ask him to and you do not doubt that, you will be able to do things like what I have done to this fig tree. You will even be able to do marvelous deeds like saying to a nearby hill, 'Uproot yourself and throw yourself into the sea', and it will happen! ²² In

addition to *that*, whenever you ask *God for something* when you pray to him, if you believe that he will give it to you, you will receive it from him.”

Matthew 21:23-27

THEME: *Jesus refused to state the basis for his authority because the Jewish leaders refused to admit where John the Baptizer’s authority came from.*

²³ After that, Jesus went into the Temple courtyard. While he was teaching *the people*, the chief priests and the elders of the Jewish Council approached him. They asked, “By what authority are you doing these things? Who authorized you to do what you did *here yesterday* [DOU]?” ²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I also will ask **you** a question, and if you answer me, I will tell you who authorized me to do these things. ²⁵ Where did John the Baptizer get his authority to baptize those who came to him? Did he get it from God or from people? [MTY/EUP]” The chief priests and elders debated among themselves about what they should answer. They said to each other, “If we say, ‘It was [MTY/EUP] from God’, he will say to us, ‘Then <you should have believed his message!/why did you not believe John’s message?’> [RHQ]’ ²⁶ If we say, ‘It was from people’, we are afraid that the crowd will react violently, because all the people believe that John was a prophet sent by God.” ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know where John got his authority.” Then **he** said to them, “Because you did not answer my question, I will not tell you who authorized me to do the things I did here yesterday.”

Matthew 21:28-32

THEME: *Jesus rebuked the religious leaders and said that it is more likely that God would accept notorious sinners than that he would accept them.*

²⁸ Then Jesus said to the chief priests and elders, “Tell me [RHQ] what you think about what I am about to tell you. There was a man who had two sons. He went to his older son and said, ‘My son, go and work in my vineyard today!’ ²⁹ But the son said to his father, ‘I do not want to go and work in the vineyard today!’ But later he changed his mind, and he went to the vineyard and worked. ³⁰ Then the father approached his younger son and said what he had said to his older son. That son said, ‘Sir, I will go and work in the vineyard today.’ But he did not go there. ³¹ So which of the man’s two sons did what their father desired?” They answered, “The older son.” Jesus explained to them what that parable meant by saying, “Think about this: It is more likely that other people, including tax collectors and prostitutes, whom you think are very sinful, will enter where God rules, than it is that you Jewish leaders will enter. ³² I say this to you because, even though John the Baptizer explained to you how to live righteously, you did not believe his message. But tax collectors and prostitutes believed his message, and they turned away from their sinful behavior. In contrast, **you**, even though you saw what they did, refused to turn away from your sinful behavior, and you did not believe John’s message.”

Matthew 21:33-46

THEME: *Jesus told a parable about the Jewish religious leaders rejecting him as Messiah.*

³³ “Listen to another parable that I will tell you. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He built a fence around it. He dug a hole in the ground inside the fence. He placed in the hole a stone tank to collect the juice that would be pressed out of the grapes. He also built a tower inside that fence that someone would sit in to guard that vineyard. He arranged for some men to care for the vineyard and to give him some of the grapes in return. Then he went away to another country. ³⁴ When it was time to harvest the grapes, the landowner sent some of his servants to the men who were caring for the vineyard to get his share of the grapes that the vineyard had produced. ³⁵ But the renters seized the servants. They beat one of them, they killed another one, and killed another one of them by throwing stones at him. ³⁶ So the landowner sent more servants than he had sent the first time. The renters treated those servants the same way that they had treated the other servants. ³⁷ Later, knowing this, the landowner sent his son to the renters to get his share of the grapes. When he sent him, he said to himself, ‘They will certainly respect my son and give him some of the grapes.’ ³⁸ But when the renters saw his son arriving, they said to each other, ‘This is the man who will inherit this vineyard! Let’s join together and kill him and divide the property among ourselves.’ ³⁹ So they grabbed him, dragged him outside the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰ Now I ask you, when the landowner returns to his vineyard, what do you think he will do to those renters?” ⁴¹ The chief priests and elders replied, “He will thoroughly destroy those wicked renters! Then he will rent the vineyard to others. They will give him his share of the grapes when they are ripe.” ⁴² Jesus said to them, “That is right, so you need to think carefully about these words which you have read [RHQ] in the Scriptures:

The builders rejected a certain stone. But others put that same stone in its proper place, and it has become the most important stone of the building [MET]. The Lord has done this, and we marvel as we look at it.

⁴³ “So, because you reject me, I am going to tell you this: God will no longer let you Jews be the people over whom he rules. Instead, he will let non-Jews be the people over whom he rules, and they will do [IDM] what he asks them to do.

⁴⁴ The important stone in the building represents me, the Messiah, and those who reject me are like people who fall on this stone. Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken into pieces {This cornerstone will break into pieces anyone who falls on it}, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the elders who were Pharisees heard this parable, they realized that he was accusing them because they did not believe that he was the Messiah. ⁴⁶ They wanted to seize him, but they did not do so because they were afraid of what the crowds would do if they did that, because the crowds considered that Jesus was a prophet.

Matthew 22:1-14

THEME: Jesus told a parable about a wedding feast to illustrate what will happen to people who do not accept him as the Messiah.

22 ¹ Then Jesus told the Jewish leaders other parables in order to illustrate what will happen to the people who do not accept him as the King God promised to send. This is one of those parables: ² “God [MTY/EUP] is like a king [SIM] who told his servants that they should make a wedding feast for his son. ³ When the feast was ready, the king sent his servants to tell the people who had been {whom he had} invited that it was time for them to come to the wedding feast. *The servants did that.* But the people who had been invited did not want to come. ⁴ So he sent other servants to again *tell the people whom he had invited that they should come to the feast.* He said to those servants, ‘Say to the people whom I invited to come to the feast, “This is what the king says to you, ‘I inform you that I have prepared the meal. The oxen and the fattened calves have been butchered and cooked. Everything is ready. It is time *now for you* to come to the wedding feast!’” ⁵ *But when the servants told them that, they disregarded what the servants said.* Some of them went to their own fields. Others went to their places of business. ⁶ The rest of them seized the king’s servants, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷ *When the king heard what had happened,* he became furious. He commanded his soldiers to go and kill those murderers and burn their cities. ⁸ *After his soldiers had done that,* the king said to his other servants, ‘I have prepared the wedding feast, but the people who were {whom I} invited do not deserve to *come to it because they did not consider it an honor to have been invited.*’ ⁹ So, go to the intersections of the main streets. Tell whomever you find that they should come to the wedding feast.’ ¹⁰ So the servants went there, and they gathered everyone they saw *who wanted to come to the feast.* They gathered *both people that were considered to be evil and those that were considered to be good.* They brought them into the hall where the wedding feast took place. The hall was filled with people. ¹¹ But when the king went *into the hall* to see the guests who were there, he saw someone who was not wearing clothes *that had been provided for the guests to wear* at a wedding feast. ¹² The king said to him, ‘Friend, <you should never have entered this hall, because you are not wearing the clothes *that guests wear* at wedding feasts!/how did you enter this hall, because you are not wearing the clothes *that are appropriate for guests to wear* at a wedding feast?> [RHQ]’ The man did not say anything, *because he did not know what to say.* ¹³ Then the king said to his attendants, ‘Tie this person’s feet and hands and throw him outside where there is total darkness. People who are there cry out *because they are suffering* and they gnash their teeth *because of their severe pain.*” ¹⁴ *Then Jesus said, “The point of this story is that God has invited many to come to him, but only a few people are the ones whom he has chosen to be there.”*

Matthew 22:15-22

THEME: Jesus taught his critics that they needed to give to God and to the government what they each required.

¹⁵ After Jesus said that, the Pharisees met together in order to plan how they could cause him to say something that would enable them to accuse him. ¹⁶ They sent to him some of their disciples, *who thought that the Israelites should pay only the tax that the Jewish authorities required them to pay.* They also sent some members of the party that supported Herod. *The members of that party thought that the Israelites should pay only the tax that the Roman government required them to pay.* *Those who were sent came and said to Jesus, “Teacher, we know that you are truthful and that you teach the truth about what God wants us to do. We also know that you do not change what you teach because of what someone says about you, even if it is an important person who does not like what you [IDM] teach.* ¹⁷ So tell us what you think [RHQ] *about this matter:* Is it right that we pay taxes to the Roman government [MTY], or not?” ¹⁸ But Jesus knew that what they really wanted to do was evil. *They were wanting him to say something that would get him in trouble with either the Jewish authorities or the Roman authorities.* So he said to them, “You are <hypocrites/pretending to ask a legitimate question>, but you are just wanting [RHQ] me to say something for which you can accuse me. ¹⁹ Show me *one of the coins with which people pay the Roman tax.*” So they showed him *a coin called a denarius.* ²⁰ He said to them, “Whose picture is *on this coin?* And *whose name is on it?*” ²¹ They answered, “*It has the picture and name of Caesar, the head of the Roman government.*” Then he said to them, “Okay, give to the government what they *require,* and give to God what he *requires.*” ²² When those men heard Jesus say that, they marveled *that his answer did not enable anyone to accuse him.* Then they left Jesus.

Matthew 22:23-33

THEME: Jesus showed from the Scriptures that the spirits of God’s people are alive after death.

²³ During that same day, some Sadducees came to Jesus. *They are a Jewish sect who do not believe that people will become alive again after they die. They wanted to ask Jesus a question.* ²⁴ *In order to discredit the idea that dead people will live again,* they said to him, “Teacher, Moses wrote *in the Scriptures,* ‘If a man dies who did not have any children, his brother must marry the *dead man’s* widow in order that she can have a child by him. The child *will be considered* the descendant of the man *who died,* and *in that way the dead man will have descendants.*’ ²⁵ Well, there were seven boys in a family *living near us.* The oldest one married someone. He *and his wife* did not have any children, and he died. So the second brother married the widow. *But he also died without having a child.* ²⁶ The same thing *happened to* the third *brother,* and also to the other four *brothers,* *who one by one married this same woman.* ²⁷ Last of all, the widow also died. ²⁸ So, at the time when people are raised from the dead, which of the seven *brothers do you think* will be her husband? Keep in mind that they had all been married to her.” ²⁹ Jesus replied to them, “You are certainly wrong *in what you are thinking.* You do not know *what is written in the Scriptures.* You also do not know *that God has the power to make people alive again.*

³⁰ The fact is that *the woman will not be the wife of any of them, because after God causes all dead people to live again, no one will be married. Instead, people will be like the angels in heaven. They do not marry.* ³¹ But as to dead people becoming alive again, God said something about that. <I'm sure you have read it./Have you not read it?> [RHQ] *Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, God said to Moses,* ³² 'I am the God whom Abraham worships and the God whom Isaac worships and the God whom Jacob worships.' It is not dead people who worship God. It is living people who worship him. *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob died long before Moses lived, but God said that they were still worshipping him, so we know their spirits were still alive!"*

³³ When the crowds of people heard *Jesus teach* that, they were amazed.

Matthew 22:34-40

THEME: *Jesus told his critics that the greatest commandments are to love God and to love others.*

³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had answered the Sadducees in such a way that the Sadducees could not *think of anything that they might say to respond to him*, the Pharisees gathered together to *plan what they would say to him. Then they approached him.* ³⁵ One of them was a man who had studied well the laws *that God gave Moses*. He wanted to see if Jesus *could answer his question well or if he would say something wrong*. He asked him, ³⁶ "Teacher, which commandment in the laws *that God gave Moses* is the most important?" ³⁷ Jesus *quoted the Scriptures as he replied,* "You must love the Lord your God with all [IDM] your <inner being/heart>. *Show that you love him* in all that you desire, in all that you feel, and in all that you think.' ³⁸ That is the most important commandment *in the laws that God gave Moses*. ³⁹ The next most important commandment *that everyone must surely obey* is: 'You must love the people you come in contact with as much as *you love yourself.*' ⁴⁰ These two commandments are the basis of every law *that Moses wrote in the Scriptures* and also of all that the prophets wrote."

Matthew 22:41-46

THEME: *Jesus showed that the Messiah must be greater than King David, and not just his descendant.*

⁴¹ While the Pharisees were still gathered together *near Jesus*, he asked them, ⁴² "What do you think about the Messiah? Whose descendant is he?" They said to him, "*He is the descendant of King David.*" ⁴³ Jesus said to them, "*If the Messiah is King David's descendant, then <David should not have called him 'Lord' when David was saying what the Holy Spirit prompted him to say.> [RHQ] ⁴⁴ David wrote this in the Scriptures about the Messiah: 'God said to my Lord, "Sit here beside me on my right, where I will greatly honor you [MTY]. Sit here while I completely defeat your enemies [MTY]."*" ⁴⁵ So, since *King David called the Messiah 'my Lord', <the Messiah cannot be just someone descended from David!/how can he be only the descendant of King David?> [RHQ] He must be much greater than David!"* ⁴⁶ No one *who heard what Jesus said* was able to think of even one word to say to him *in response*. And after that, no one else ever dared to ask him another question to *try to trap him*.

Matthew 23:1-12

THEME: *Jesus warned the people against the hypocritical behavior of the religious leaders.*

23 ¹ Then Jesus said to the crowd and to us his disciples, ² "**Moses** was the *renowned teacher* who taught *the people the laws that God gave him* [MTY]. Now, the Pharisees and the men who teach our *Jewish laws* have made themselves the ones who interpret those laws [IDM]. ³ Consequently, you should do **whatever they tell you that you must do**. But do not do what they do, because they themselves do not do what they tell you *that you must do*. ⁴ They *require you to obey many rules that are difficult to obey*. But **they themselves do not help anyone obey those rules**. It is as if they are tying up loads that are hard to carry and putting them on your shoulders [MET] *for you to carry. But they themselves do not desire to help anyone obey those laws. They are like people who do not want to lift even the slightest load that they could lift [MET] ⁵ with one finger. Whatever they do, they do it to be seen by other people {so that other people will see them doing that}. For example, they make extra wide the tiny boxes containing portions of Scripture that they wear on their arms. They enlarge the tassels on their robes, to make others think that they are pious. ⁶ They want people to honor them. For example, at dinner parties they sit in the seats where the most important people sit. In the places of worship they want to sit in the seats where the most honored people sit. ⁷ Also, they want people to greet them respectfully in the market places and to honor them by calling them 'Teacher'. ⁸ But **you who are my disciples** should not allow people to address you honorably as 'Rabbi', which means 'teacher'. I am the only one who is really your teacher, which means that you are all equal, like brothers and sisters, and none of you should act superior to another, as the Pharisees do. ⁹ Do not honor anyone on earth by addressing him as 'Father', because God, your Father in heaven, is the only *spiritual* father of all of you. ¹⁰ Do not allow people to call you 'Instructors', because I, the Messiah, am the one instructor who teaches all of you. ¹¹ In contrast, everyone among you who wants *God to consider them* to be important must serve others as **servants** do. ¹² God will humble those who exalt themselves. And he will exalt those who humble themselves."*

Matthew 23:13-14

THEME: *Jesus warned the religious leaders about preventing people from letting God rule their lives.*

¹³ Then Jesus said to the religious leaders, “You men who teach the Jewish laws and you Pharisees are hypocrites! There will be terrible punishment for you, because by teaching what is false, you prevent people [MTY/HYP] who are thinking about letting God rule their lives from doing that [MET]. What you are doing is like closing a gate [MET] so that people who are wanting to enter a city cannot go in. As for you, you do not let God rule your lives. Neither do you allow other people to let God rule their lives. What you do is like not going into a house yourselves, and not allowing others to enter it, either [MET].^e

Matthew 23:15

THEME: *Jesus also warned the religious leaders about zealously encouraging others to believe what they teach.*

¹⁵ “You are hypocrites, you men who teach the Jewish laws and you Pharisees! Your punishment will be terrible, because you exert yourselves very much to get even one person to believe what you teach. For instance, you travel across seas and lands to distant places in order to do that. And as a result, when one person believes what you teach, you make that person much more deserving to go to hell than you yourselves deserve to.

Matthew 23:16-22

THEME: *Jesus rebuked the religious leaders about their silly ideas about supporting their promises with oaths.*

¹⁶ “You Jewish leaders, your punishment will be terrible! You are like people who are blind [MET] who are trying to lead others. You say, ‘In the case of those who promise to do something and then ask the Temple to affirm what they have promised, it means nothing if they do not do what they have promised. But if they ask the gold that is in the Temple to affirm what they have promised, they must do what they promised.’¹⁷ You are fools, and you are like people who are blind [MET]! The gold that is in the Temple is important, but the Temple is even more important [RHQ], because it is the Temple that the gold is in that sets the gold apart for a special use for God.¹⁸ Also you say, ‘In the case of those who promise to do something and then ask the altar to affirm what they have promised, it means nothing if they do not do what they have promised. But if they ask the gift that they have put on the altar to support what they have promised, they must do what they promised.’¹⁹ You are like people who are blind [MET]. The gift that is offered on the altar is important, but the altar is even more important [RHQ] because it is the altar on which the offering is offered that sets it apart for a special use for God.²⁰ So, those who promise to do something, and then ask the altar to affirm what they have promised are asking everything on the altar to support what they promised.²¹ Those who promise to do something, and then ask the Temple to affirm what they promised, are asking that God, to whom the Temple belongs, will affirm what they have promised.²² Those who promise to do something and then ask heaven to affirm what they promised are asking the throne of God and God, who sits on that throne, to affirm what they promised.

Matthew 23:23-24

THEME: *Jesus also rebuked the religious leaders about paying attention to unimportant laws and at the same time ignoring important ones.*

²³ You men who teach the Jewish laws and you Pharisees, your punishment will be terrible! You are hypocrites because, even though you give to God a tenth of the herbs you produce, such as mint, dill, and cummin, you do not obey God’s laws that are more important. For example, you do not act justly toward others, you do not act mercifully toward people, and you are not trustworthy. It is good to give a tenth of your herbs to God, but you should also obey these other more important laws.²⁴ You leaders are like blind people who are trying to lead others. According to your laws you say that touching gnats and camels makes you unacceptable to God. What you are doing is like straining a gnat out of a jar of water so that you do not swallow it and thereby become unacceptable to God, and at the same time swallowing a camel with the water [MET]!

Matthew 23:25-26

THEME: *Jesus also rebuked the religious leaders about being greedy and selfish.*

²⁵ “You men who teach people the Jewish laws and you Pharisees, your punishment will be terrible! You are hypocrites! You are greedy and selfish, but you make yourselves appear holy. You are like cups and plates that have been cleaned on the outside, but on the inside they are very filthy.²⁶ You blind Pharisees! First you must stop being greedy and selfish. Then you will be able to do what is righteous. That will be like cleaning the inside of a cup first. Then when you clean [MET] the outside of the cup, the cup will truly be clean.

^e Some Greek manuscripts add v. 14, “You teachers of our laws and you Pharisees will suffer terribly in hell. You are hypocrites because you swindle [MET] the houses and property of widows. Then you pretend that you are good, as you pray long prayers publicly. God will certainly punish you very severely.”

Matthew 23:27-28

THEME: Jesus rebuked the religious leaders for being hypocrites and pretending to be righteous.

²⁷“You men who teach the *Jewish* laws and you Pharisees, your punishment will be terrible! You are hypocrites! You are like tombs [SIM] that are painted white *so that people can see them and avoid touching them*. The outside surfaces are beautiful, but inside they are full of dead people’s bones and filth. ²⁸You are *like those tombs*. When people look at you, they think that you are righteous, but in your <inner beings/hearts> you are hypocrites and you disobey *God’s* commands.

Matthew 23:29-36

THEME: Jesus accused the religious leaders of being guilty of killing all the prophets.

²⁹“You men who teach the *Jewish* laws and you Pharisees are hypocrites! Your punishment will be terrible! You rebuild the tombs of the *prophets whom others killed long ago*. You decorate the monuments *that honor* righteous *people*. ³⁰You say, ‘If we had *lived* when our ancestors [MET] *lived*, we would not have helped [MET] those who killed [MTY] the prophets.’ ³¹Thus you *recognize that you should honor the prophets, but you disregard the word of God that other men whom God has sent teach you*. In that way you testify against yourselves that you are descendants and disciples [MET] of those who killed the prophets. ³²**You** are as ready to murder people as [MET] your ancestors were! ³³*You people are so wicked!* You are *as dangerous as poisonous snakes* [DOU, MET]! <You *foolishly* think that you will escape being punished in hell!/Do you *foolishly* think that you will escape when *God* punishes *wicked people* in hell?> [RHQ] ³⁴Take note that this is why I will send prophets, wise men, and other men who will teach you *my message*. You will kill some of them by nailing them to crosses, and you will kill some in other ways. You will whip some of them in the places where you worship and *you will* chase them from city to city. ³⁵As a result, *God* will consider that **you** are guilty for killing [SYN] all the righteous *people*, including killing [MTY] *Adam’s son* Abel, who was a righteous man [SYN], and Zachariah, the son of Barachiah, whom you *are guilty of killing in the holy place* between the Temple and the altar, and for killing *all the prophets* who lived between the *times that those two men lived*. ³⁶Think about this: You people who have observed my ministry, it is you whom *God* will punish for *killing all those prophets!*

Matthew 23:37-39

THEME: Jesus expressed his sorrow about what would happen to Jerusalem.

³⁷“O *people of Jerusalem* [MTY, APO], you killed the prophets *who lived long ago*, and you killed others whom *God* sent to you. You killed them by throwing stones at them [DOU]! Many times I wanted to gather you together *to protect you*, like a hen gathers her young chicks under her wings [MET]. But you did not want *me to do that*. ³⁸So listen to this: Your city [SYN] will become an uninhabited place. ³⁹Keep this in mind: You will see me again only when I *return*, and you say *about me*, ‘*God* is truly pleased with this man who comes with *God’s* authority [MTY].”

Matthew 24:1-2

THEME: Jesus told his disciples that Jerusalem would be destroyed.

24 ¹Jesus left the Temple *courtyard*. As he was walking along, we disciples came to him to ask him to note *how beautiful* the Temple buildings *were*. ²He said to us, “These buildings that you are looking at [RHQ] *are wonderful, but* I want to tell you *something about them*. *They will be completely destroyed* {*Foreign invaders will completely destroy them*}. Every stone *in these buildings* will be thrown down {they will throw down every stone in these buildings}. Not one stone will be left {They will not leave one stone} on top of another stone.”

Matthew 24:3-14

THEME: Jesus told his disciples about the distressing things that would happen before his return.

³*Later*, as Jesus was sitting alone on the *slope of Olive Tree Hill*, we disciples went to him and asked him, “When will this happen *to the buildings of the Temple*? Also, tell us what will happen to indicate that you are *about to* come again, and *to indicate* that this world is ending?”

⁴Jesus replied, “*All that I will say is*, be sure that no one deceives you *about what will happen!* ⁵Many *people* will come and say <that I sent them/that they have my authority> [MTY]. They will say, ‘I am the Messiah’, and they will deceive many *people*. ⁶You will hear about wars *that are close* and wars that are far away, but do not let that trouble you. Keep in mind that *God has said that* those things must happen. But *when they happen*, it will not mean that the end of the *world* has come! ⁷*Groups in various countries* will fight each other, and *various governments will also fight* against each other. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸These things will happen first. Then there will be other things that *will happen before I return*. *What will happen will be as painful as birth pains* [MET].

⁹“At that time *people who oppose you* will take you to the *authorities, who* will mistreat you and kill you. You will be hated by *people who live in* all nations [PRS] {*People who live in* all nations [PRS] will hate you} because *you believe in* me [MTY]. ¹⁰Also, many *people* will stop believing *in me because of the way they will suffer*. They will betray each other

and will hate each other. ¹¹ Many will come saying that they are prophets, but they will be lying, and they will deceive many people. ¹² Because there will be more and more *people* who will disobey *God's* laws [PRS], many *people* will no longer [MET] love *their fellow believers* [PRS]. ¹³ But *all* those who keep on *believing in me* [EUP] to the end of *their lives* will be saved. ¹⁴ Furthermore, the good message about my ruling over people's lives will be preached in every part of the world, in order that people of all ethnic groups may hear it. Then the end of *the world* will come.

Matthew 24:15-22

THEME: *Jesus told his disciples about the suffering that would come when Jerusalem was about to be destroyed.*

¹⁵ "But before the world ends, the disgusting person who will defile the holy Temple and cause people to abandon it will stand in the Temple. Daniel the prophet spoke and wrote about that long ago. May everyone who reads this pay attention to the following warning from me: ¹⁶ When you see that happen in the Temple, those of you who are in Judea district must flee to the higher hills! ¹⁷ Those who are outside their houses must not go back into their houses to get things before they flee. ¹⁸ Those who are working in a field should not turn back to get their outer clothing before they flee. ¹⁹ I feel very sorry for women who will be pregnant and women who will be nursing their babies in those days, because it will be very difficult for them to run away! ²⁰ Pray that you will not have to flee <in the winter/in the rainy season> when it will be hard to travel. People who think that God never allows anyone to do any work on our day of rest will not help you as you flee, so pray also that you will not have to flee on such a day, ²¹ because people will suffer very severely when those things happen. People have never suffered that severely since God created the world until now, and no one will ever suffer like that again. ²² If God had not decided to shorten that time [MTY] when people will suffer so much, everyone [LIT] would die. But he has decided to shorten it because he is concerned about the people whom he has chosen.

Matthew 24:23-28

THEME: *Jesus warned his disciples not to believe false reports about his return because everyone will see him when he comes.*

²³⁻²⁴ "At that time people will appear who will falsely say that they are the Messiah or that they are prophets. They will perform many kinds <of miracles/of things that ordinary people cannot do>, in order to deceive people. They will even try to see if it is possible to deceive you people whom God has chosen. So, at that time, if someone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or if someone says, 'There is the Messiah!' do not believe it! ²⁵ Do not forget that I have warned you about all this before it happens. ²⁶ So if someone says to you, 'Look, the Messiah is in the desolate area!' do not go there. Likewise, if someone says to you, 'Look, he is in a secret room!' do not believe that person, ²⁷ because just like lightning flashes from the east to the west and people everywhere can see it [SIM], when I, the one who came from heaven, return again, everyone will see me. ²⁸ When I return, it will be as obvious to everyone as the fact that wherever you see vultures gathering, you know that there will be an animal carcass [MET] there. (OR, Just like the vultures gather together wherever there is an animal carcass, God will punish sinful people wherever they are.)

Matthew 24:29-31

THEME: *Jesus told his disciples what will happen at the time of his return.*

²⁹ "Immediately after many people have suffered during those days, the universe will become dark. The sun will become dark. The moon will not shine. The stars will fall from the sky. And the powerful objects in the sky will be shaken. (OR, And the spiritual beings in space will be deposed.) ³⁰ After that, something will be seen {people will observe something} in the sky that indicates that I, the one who came from heaven, am returning to the earth. Then unbelieving people from all ethnic groups of the earth will mourn because they will be afraid of God punishing them. They will see me, the one who came from heaven, coming on the clouds with power and great glory as I return to the earth. ³¹ I will send my angels to the earth from everywhere in the heavens. They will be blowing trumpets loudly. Then from throughout the whole earth [DOU] they will gather the people whom I have chosen.

Matthew 24:32-35

THEME: *Jesus told his disciples how to know when the time of his return was near.*

³² "Now I want you to learn something from this parable about how fig trees grow. In this area, when the branches of a fig tree become tender and its leaves begin to sprout, you know that summer is near. ³³ Similarly, when you see all these things that I have just described happening, you will know that the time for me to return is very close [MET]. ³⁴ Keep this in mind: All of these events will happen before all the people who have observed the things that I have done have died [EUP]. ³⁵ You can be certain that these things that I have told you about will happen. You can be more certain of that than you can be certain that the earth and sky [LIT] will continue to exist.

Matthew 24:36-44

THEME: *Jesus told his disciples to be ready because they do not know the time of his return.*

³⁶ "But neither I, nor any other person, nor any angel in heaven, knows either the day or the hour when the things that I have told you about will happen. Only God, my Father, knows. ³⁷⁻³⁹ It will be like what happened when Noah lived. Until

the flood came, *the people* did not know that *anything bad would happen* to them. Before the flood waters covered the earth, *the people* were eating and drinking as usual. Some men were marrying women and *some parents* were giving *their daughters to men to marry* them. They were doing all this until the day that Noah and his family entered the big boat. And then the flood came and drowned all *those who were not in the boat*. Similarly, *the unbelieving people will not know* when I, *the one who came from heaven*, will return, *and they will not be expecting me*.⁴⁰ When I return, I will not take all people up to heaven. I will take only those who trust in me. For example, two people will be in the fields. One of them will be taken {I will take one of them} up to heaven and the other person will be left {and I will leave the other person} here to be punished.⁴¹ Similarly, two women will be at the mill grinding grain. One of them will be taken up to heaven and the other will be left.⁴² So, because you do not know what day I, your Lord, will return to the earth, you need to be ready for me to return at any time.⁴³ You know that if the owners of a house knew at what time in the night thieves would come, they would be awake and prevent the thieves from breaking into their houses. Similarly I will come just like unexpectedly as a thief.⁴⁴ So you need to be ready for my return, because I, the one who came from heaven, will return to the earth at a time when you do not expect me to come.

Matthew 24:45-51

THEME: Jesus told a parable to warn his disciples not to act wickedly, thinking that he would not return soon.

⁴⁵“Think about what every faithful and wise servant is like [RHQ]. The house owner appoints one servant to supervise the other servants. He tells him to give them food at the proper times. Then he leaves on a long trip.⁴⁶ If the servant is doing that work when the house owner returns, the house owner will be very pleased with him.⁴⁷ Think about this: The house owner will appoint that one servant to be the supervisor of all his possessions.⁴⁸ But a wicked servant might say to himself, ‘The owner has been away for a long time, so he probably will not return soon and find out what I am doing.’⁴⁹ So he will begin to beat the other servants and eat and drink with those who are drunk.⁵⁰ Then the house owner will come back at a time when the servant does not expect him [DOU].⁵¹ He will punish that servant severely [HYP], (OR, cut that servant into two pieces) and he will put him where <the hypocrites/the ones who only pretended to be good> are put. In that place the people cry and grind their teeth because they suffer very much.”

Matthew 25:1-13

THEME: Jesus taught in a parable that his disciples should always be ready for his return.

25¹ Jesus continued by saying, “I will tell you something else about the time when I return from heaven as king [MET]. What will happen to many people who say that they know me will be like what happened to ten virgins who took their lanterns and went to the place where they would meet a bridegroom and go to his wedding celebration.² Five of the virgins were foolish and five of them were wise.³ The virgins who were foolish took their lanterns, but they did not take any extra olive oil for the lanterns.⁴ But the virgins who were wise took oil in their flasks as well as in their lanterns.⁵ The bridegroom was delayed, and it became late in the night. So all the virgins became sleepy and fell asleep.⁶ In the middle of the night someone woke them up by shouting, ‘Hey! The bridegroom is arriving! Go outside and meet him!’⁷ So all the virgins got up and trimmed their lantern wicks so that they would burn properly.⁸ The foolish virgins said to the wise ones, ‘Give us some of your olive oil, because our lanterns are about to go out!’⁹ The wise virgins replied, ‘No, because there might not be enough oil for our lanterns and for yours. Go to a store and buy some for yourselves!’¹⁰ But while the foolish virgins were going to buy some oil, the bridegroom arrived. So the wise virgins, who were ready, went with him to the wedding hall where the bride was waiting. Then the door was closed {someone closed the door of that hall}.¹¹ Later, the rest of the virgins came to the hall and they called to the bridegroom, ‘Sir, open the door for us!’¹² But he said to them, ‘The truth is that I do not know you, so I will not open the door for you!’¹³ Then Jesus continued by saying, “So, in order that that this will not happen to you, keep expecting that I will return, because you do not know when [MTY] it will be.”

Matthew 25:14-30

THEME: Jesus told a parable to teach his disciples about making good use of what God has given them.

¹⁴“When I return from heaven as king, I will deal with those who say that they have been serving me like a man who was about to go on a long journey dealt with his servants. He called them together and gave them each some of his wealth to invest and gain more money for him.¹⁵ He gave them money according to their ability to take care of it. For example, he gave one servant five thousand dollars, he gave another servant two thousand dollars, and he gave another servant one thousand dollars. Then he left on his journey.¹⁶ The servant who had received five thousand dollars went immediately and used that money to gain five thousand dollars more.¹⁷ Similarly, the servant who had received two thousand dollars gained two thousand dollars more.¹⁸ But the servant who had received one thousand dollars went and dug a hole in the ground and hid the money there to keep it safe.

¹⁹“After a long time the servants’ boss returned. He called them together to find out what they had done with his money.

²⁰The servant who had received five thousand dollars brought two bags, each containing five thousand dollars. He said, ‘Boss, you gave me five thousand dollars to take care of. Look, I have gained five thousand more!’²¹ His boss replied, ‘You are a very good and faithful servant! You have done very well! You have faithfully handled a small amount of money, so I will put you in charge of a lot of things. Come and be happy with me!’

²²“The servant who had *received* two thousand dollars also came and said, ‘Boss, you gave me two thousand dollars to take care of. Look, I have gained two thousand more!’ ²³His boss replied, ‘You are a *very* good and faithful servant! You have done very well! You have faithfully handled a small *amount of money*, so I will put you in charge of a lot of things. Come and be happy with me!’

²⁴“Then the servant who had received one thousand dollars came. He said, ‘Boss, I *was afraid of you*. I knew that you are a man who does not do foolish things with his money. *You even take from others money* that does not really belong to you, *like a farmer who harvests grain from another man’s field* where he did not even plant *the seeds*.’ ²⁵So because I was afraid of what you would do to me if I did not make a profit from my business, I went out and hid your thousand dollars in the ground to keep it safe. Here, this is *the money* that belongs to you!’ ²⁶His boss replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! <You knew that I take *from others money* that does not really belong to me, *like a farmer who harvests grain from another man’s field* where I did not even plant *the seeds*!> Did you not know that I take *from others money that does not really belong to me, like a farmer who harvests grain from another man’s field* where I did not even plant *the seeds*?> [RHQ]’ ²⁷So then, you should have put my money on deposit in a bank, so that when I returned I would get it back with the interest *it earned*!’ ²⁸Then the boss said to his other servants, ‘Take the thousand dollars from him, and give it to *the servant* who has the ten thousand dollars!’ ²⁹To those who *use well what they have received*, God will give more, and they will have plenty. But from those who *do not use well what they have received*, even what they *already* have will be taken away. ³⁰Furthermore, throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where he will be *with those who are* wailing and gnashing their teeth *because they are in much pain*.

Matthew 25:31-46

THEME: *Jesus told a parable about how he will judge between those who have shown kindness to others and those who have not.*

³¹“When I, the one who came from heaven, come again, I will come with all my radiance and *bring* all my angels with me. Then I will sit as a king on my wonderful throne to *judge people*.’ ³²People from all nations [MTY] will be gathered in front of me {*The angels* will gather in front of me people from all nations}. Then I will separate them, one from another, as a shepherd separates his sheep from his goats. ³³I will put *the righteous people* on my right and *the unrighteous ones on my left*, as a shepherd puts sheep on one side and goats on the other side.

³⁴“Then I will say to those on my right, ‘You people who have been blessed by my Father {whom my Father has blessed}, come! From the time he created the world, he has been preparing to allow you to *receive the blessings that he will give to all those* who let him rule their lives. *Now is the time for you to receive those blessings!*’ ³⁵*They belong to you*, because you gave me something to eat when I was hungry. (OR, *They belong to you*. It is as though you gave me something to eat when I was hungry.) You gave me something to drink when I was thirsty. When I was a stranger *in your town*, you invited me to *stay in your houses*.’ ³⁶When I needed clothes [MTY], you gave me some. When I was sick, you took care of me. When I was in prison, you came to visit me.’

³⁷“Then the righteous people will reply, ‘Lord, when were you hungry and we saw you and gave you something to eat? When were you thirsty and we gave you something to drink?’ ³⁸When were you a stranger *in our town* and we invited you to *stay in our houses*? When did you need clothes and we gave you some?’ ³⁹When were you sick or in prison and we went to visit you?’ *We do not remember doing any of these things for you.*

⁴⁰“I will reply, ‘The truth is that whatever you did for any one of your fellow believers, even an unimportant one, *it was as though* you did it for me.’

⁴¹“Then I will say to those on my left, ‘You people who have been cursed *by God* {whom God has cursed}, leave me! Go into the eternal fire that God has prepared for <the devil/Satan> and his angels!’ ⁴²*It is right for you to go there*, because you did not give me anything to eat when I was hungry. You did not give me anything to drink when I was thirsty. ⁴³You did not invite me into *your homes* when I was a stranger *in your town*. You did not give me any clothes when I needed them [MTY]. You did not take care of me when I was sick or in prison.’

⁴⁴“They will answer, ‘Lord, when were you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and we did not help you?’

⁴⁵“I will reply, ‘The truth is that whenever you did not do anything to help any one of *my people*, even if they were unimportant people, *it was as though* you did not do anything to help me.’

⁴⁶“Then those people *on my left* will go away to the place where *they* will be punished {God will punish them} eternally, but the righteous people will go to where they will live forever *with God*.”

Matthew 26:1-5

THEME: *Jesus told his disciples of his coming arrest. The Jewish leaders planned how to seize Jesus.*

26 ¹When Jesus had finished *saying* all those things, he said to *us* disciples, ²“You know that two days from now *we will celebrate* the Passover festival. *At that time* I, the one who came from heaven, will be put {they will put me, the one who came from heaven,} into the hands of those who will nail me to a cross.”

³At the same time the chief priests and the Jewish elders gathered in the home of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas. ⁴*There* they plotted how they could seize Jesus in some deceitful way so that they could have him executed. ⁵But they said, “*We must not do it during the Passover festival, because if we do it then, the people might riot.*”

Matthew 26:6-13

THEME: *Jesus commended a woman for showing her appreciation of him.*

⁶While Jesus *and we* were in Bethany *village* in the home of Simon, whom *Jesus had healed of leprosy*, ⁷a woman came to him. She *was carrying* a stone jar *containing* very expensive perfume. *To show how much she appreciated Jesus*, she poured the perfume on his head as he was eating. ⁸When *we* disciples saw that, *some of us* were angry. *One of us* said, “<It is terrible that this perfume was wasted!/Why was this perfume wasted?> [RHQ] ⁹*We could have sold it and gotten a lot of money for it! Then the money could have been given {we could have given the money} to poor people.*” ¹⁰Jesus knew *what we were saying*. So he said to us, “<You should not be bothering this woman!/Why are you bothering this woman?> [RHQ] She has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹*Keep in mind that you will always have poor people among you, so you can help them whenever you want to. But I will not always be with you, so it is good for her to show now that she appreciates me!*” ¹²When she poured this perfume on my body, *it was as if she knew that I am going to die soon. And it is as if she* has anointed my body for being buried. ¹³I will tell you this: Wherever this good message *about me* is preached {people preach this good message about me} throughout the world, those who preach it will tell what this woman has done, *and as a result* people will *always* remember her.”

Matthew 26:14-16

THEME: *Judas agreed to betray Jesus for thirty silver coins.*

¹⁴Then Judas Iscariot, *even though he was one of us twelve disciples*, went to the chief priests. ¹⁵He asked them, “If I enable you to seize *Jesus*, how much *money* are you willing to give me?” They *agreed to give him* thirty silver coins. So they counted out the coins and *gave them* to him. ¹⁶From that time Judas watched for an opportunity to enable them to seize *Jesus*.

Matthew 26:17-25

THEME: *Two disciples prepared the Passover meal. During the meal, Jesus said that Judas would betray him.*

¹⁷On the first day of the *week-long festival* <when we Jews ate bread which had no yeast in it/of Unleavened Bread>, we disciples went to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to prepare *the meal* for the Passover *celebration* so that we can eat it with you?” ¹⁸*In reply*, he gave instructions to two disciples about where they should go. He said to them, “Go into the city to a man with whom I have previously arranged this. Tell him that the teacher says, ‘The time [MTY] that I told you about is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover meal with my disciples at your house, and I have sent these two to prepare the meal.’” ¹⁹So the two disciples did as Jesus told them. They went and prepared the Passover meal in that man’s house.

²⁰When it was evening, Jesus was eating the meal with us twelve disciples. ²¹While we were eating, he said to us, “Listen carefully to this: One of you is going to enable *my enemies* to seize me.” ²²We were very sad. We began to say to him, one after the other, “Lord, <it is surely not I!/I’m not the one, am I?> [RHQ]” ²³He replied, “The one who will enable my enemies to seize me is the one of you who is dipping bread [MTY] into *the sauce* in the dish along with me. ²⁴*It is certain that* I, the one who came from heaven, will die [EUP], because that is what has been written {the prophets have written} about me. But there will be terrible punishment for the man who enables *my enemies* to seize me! It would be better for that man if he had never been born!” ²⁵Then Judas, the one who was going to betray him, said, “Teacher, <surely it is not I!/I’m not the one, am I?> [RHQ]” Jesus replied, “Yes, you are the one.”

Matthew 26:26-30

THEME: *Jesus gave the disciples the bread and wine to symbolize his coming death.*

²⁶While we were eating, Jesus took a *small loaf* of bread and thanked God for it. He broke it *into pieces* and gave it to us disciples, and said, “Take this *bread* and eat it. *It represents* my body.” ²⁷Later he took a cup of wine and thanked God for it. Then he gave it to us, saying, “Drink some of *the wine* in this cup, all of you. ²⁸*The wine* in this cup *represents* my blood, which will soon flow *from my body* when I die. *With* this blood I will sign the new agreement that God is making to forgive the sins of many people. ²⁹Note this carefully: I will not drink wine in this way anymore until the time when I drink it with you with a new meaning. *That will happen* when my Father enables me to begin to rule as king.”

³⁰After we sang a hymn, we started out towards Olive Tree Hill.

Matthew 26:31-35

THEME: *Jesus prophesied that Peter would deny three times that he knew Jesus.*

³¹ On the way, Jesus told us, “This night all of you will desert me because of *what will happen to me!* *This is certain to happen because these words that God said are written in the Scriptures: ‘I will cause the shepherd to be killed, and all the sheep will be scattered {scatter}.’* ³² But after I have *died and become alive again*, I will go ahead of you to Galilee *district and meet you there.*” ³³ Peter replied, “Perhaps all *the other disciples* will desert you *when they see what happens to you*, but I *certainly* will never *leave you!*” ³⁴ Jesus replied to him, “The truth is that this very night, before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you do not know me!” ³⁵ Peter said to him, “Even if they kill me *while I am defending you*, I will never say that I do not know you!” All *the rest of us* disciples also said the same *thing*.

Matthew 26:36-46

THEME: *While the disciples slept, Jesus prayed that God would spare him from the coming suffering.*

³⁶ Then Jesus went with us to a place that is called {that people call} Gethsemane. There he said to *most of us*, “Stay here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷ He took Peter, James, and John with him. He became extremely distressed. ³⁸ Then he said to them, “I [SYN] am very sorrowful, so much so that I *feel as if I were* about to die! Remain here and stay awake with me!” ³⁹ After going a little further, he threw himself face down *on the ground*. He prayed, “My Father, if it is possible [MTY], do not make me have to endure the suffering *that is coming* now. But do not do as I want. Instead, do as you want!” ⁴⁰ Then he returned to the *three* disciples and saw that they were sleeping. He *woke* Peter and said to him, “◀I am disappointed that you *men fell asleep and* were not able to stay awake with me for just a short time!/Why were you men not able to stay awake with me for just one hour?▶ [RHQ] ⁴¹ You must keep alert and pray so that you can resist when you are tempted {something tempts you}. You want to *do what I tell you*, but you [SYN] are not strong enough to *actually do it.*”

⁴² He went away a second time. He prayed, “My Father, if it is necessary for me to suffer [LIT], may what you want happen!”

⁴³ When he returned to the *three disciples*, he saw that they were asleep *again*. They could not keep their eyes open [IDM].

⁴⁴ So he left them and went away again. He prayed the third time, saying the same thing *that he had prayed before.* ⁴⁵ Then he returned to *us* disciples. He *woke us up and* said to *us*, “◀I am disappointed that you are still sleeping and resting!/Why are you still sleeping and resting?▶ [RHQ] *Look! Someone* is about to enable sinful *men* to seize *me*, the one who came from heaven! ⁴⁶ Get up! Let’s go to *meet them!* Here comes the one who is enabling them to seize me!”

Matthew 26:47-56

THEME: *After Judas enabled men to seize Jesus, Jesus ridiculed them, but the disciples fled.*

⁴⁷ While *Jesus* was still speaking, *Judas arrived.* *Even though he was one of us twelve disciples*, he came to *enable Jesus’ enemies to seize him.* A large crowd carrying swords and clubs was with him. They had been sent by the chief priests and elders {the chief priests and *Jewish* elders had sent them}. ⁴⁸ Judas had *previously* arranged to give them a signal, saying, “The man whom I will kiss is the one *you want.* Seize him!” ⁴⁹ He immediately went to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Teacher!” Then he kissed Jesus *on the neck/cheek.* ⁵⁰ Jesus replied, “Friend, is it to *kiss me* that you are here?” (OR, Do what you have come for!) Then *the men who came with Judas* stepped forward and seized Jesus. ⁵¹ Suddenly, one of the men who was with Jesus pulled his sword out of *its sheath.* He struck the servant of the high priest to *kill him, but only* cut off his ear. ⁵² Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back in its sheath! All those who try to kill others with a sword will themselves be killed with a sword! ⁵³ Do you think that [RHQ] if I asked my Father, he would not immediately send more than ◀*twelve armies of/72 thousand*▶ angels to help me? ⁵⁴ *But if I did that, what the prophets* have written in the Scriptures *about what will happen to the Messiah* would not be fulfilled {happen} [RHQ].”

⁵⁵ At that time Jesus said to the crowd *that was seizing him*, “◀It is ridiculous that you have come *here* to seize me with swords and clubs, as *if I were* a bandit!/Have you come here to seize me with swords and clubs, as if I were a bandit?▶ [RHQ] Day after day I sat in the Temple *courtyard*, teaching *the people.* Why did you not arrest me *then?* ⁵⁶ But all this is happening to fulfill what the prophets *have written in the Scriptures about me.*” Then all of us disciples deserted Jesus and ran away.

Matthew 26:57-68

THEME: *Jesus was put on trial before the Jewish Council.*

⁵⁷ The men who had seized Jesus took him to *the house where Caiaphas, the high priest, lived.* The men who taught the *Jewish* laws and the *Jewish* elders had already gathered *there.* ⁵⁸ Peter followed *Jesus* at a distance. He came to the high priest’s courtyard. He entered *the courtyard* and sat down with the guards to see what would happen.

⁵⁹ The chief priests and the rest of the *Jewish* Council were trying to find people who would tell lies about Jesus so that they could *convince the Roman authorities* to execute him. ⁶⁰ But even though many people spoke lies about him, they did not find anyone *who said anything that was useful.* Finally two men came forward ⁶¹ and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy God’s Temple and to rebuild it within three days.’” ⁶² Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, “Are you not

going to reply? What *do you say about* these things that they are saying *to accuse you?*" ⁶³ But Jesus remained silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I command you to tell us *the truth*, knowing that the all-powerful God *is listening to you*: Are you the Messiah, <the Son of God/the man who is also God>?" ⁶⁴ Jesus replied, "Yes, *it is as you say*. But I will also say this to all of you: Some day you will see *me*, the one who came from heaven, sitting beside [MTY] Almighty God, and ruling. You will also see me coming on the clouds *from heaven!*"

⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his outer garment. *That was the custom to show that he was shocked to hear Jesus say that he was equal to God*. Then he said, "This man has insulted God! He claims to be equal with God! <We certainly do not need anyone else to testify *against this man!*/Why should we seek any more people who will testify *against this man?*> [RHQ] You heard what he said! ⁶⁶ What have you decided?" *The Jewish leaders* replied, "According to our laws, he is guilty and deserves to be executed!" ⁶⁷ Then *some of them* spat in his face. *Others* struck him with their fists. *Others, after they blindfolded him*, slapped him ⁶⁸ and said, "Since you claim that [IRO] you are the Messiah, tell us who hit you!"

Matthew 26:69-75

THEME: Peter denied three times that he knew Jesus.

⁶⁹ Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl came up to him *and looked at him*. She said, "You also were with Jesus, *that man* from Galilee district!" ⁷⁰ But while everyone there was listening, he denied it. He said, "I do not know what you are talking about!" ⁷¹ Then he went out to the gateway of the courtyard. Another servant girl saw him and said to the people who were standing nearby, "This man was with Jesus, *the man* from Nazareth." ⁷² But Peter again denied it. He said, "May God punish me *if I am lying!* I tell you, I do not even know that man!" ⁷³ After a little while, *one of the people* who were standing there approached Peter and said to him, "It is certain that you are one of those *who were with that man*. We can tell from your accent that you *are from Galilee*." ⁷⁴ Then Peter began to proclaim loudly that God should curse him *if he was lying*. He asked God in heaven to witness *that he was telling the truth* and said, "I do not know that man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered the words that Jesus had spoken *to him*, "Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you do not know me." And Peter went *out of the courtyard*, crying because he was very sad *about what he had done*.

Matthew 27:1-2

THEME: The Jewish religious leaders took Jesus to the Roman governor.

27 ¹Very early the next morning all the chief priests and Jewish elders decided how *to arrange for the Romans* to execute Jesus. ²They tied his hands and took him to Pilate, the *Roman* governor.

Matthew 27:3-10

THEME: After Judas returned the money and hanged himself, the Jewish leaders bought a field with the money, in fulfillment of prophecy.

³ When Judas, the one who had <betrayed/enabled Jesus' enemies to seize> him, realized that they had decided to have Jesus executed, he was very sorry *about what he had done*. He took the thirty coins back to the chief priests and elders. ⁴ He said, "I have sinned. I have <betrayed/enabled you to seize> a man who <is innocent/has not done anything wrong>." They replied, "<That means nothing to us!/What does that mean to us?> [RHQ] That is your problem!" ⁵ So Judas *took the money and* threw it inside the Temple. Then he went away and hanged himself.

⁶ *Later* the high priests *found* the coins. They picked them up and said, "This is money that we paid *to have a man killed* [MTY], and our law does not allow *such money* to be put {us to put *such money*} into the *Temple* treasury." ⁷ So they decided to use that money to buy the field where clay was dug for making pots {men dug ground for making pots}. *They made that field* a place where they buried strangers *who died in Jerusalem*. ⁸ That is why that place is still called {why they still call that place} 'The field of blood.' ⁹ *By buying that field*, they fulfilled these words that the prophet Jeremiah wrote *long ago*:

They took the thirty silver coins;

That was what the leaders of Israel decided *that he was worth*;

¹⁰ and with that money they bought the field where clay was dug for potters.

They did that as the Lord had commanded me.

Matthew 27:11-26

THEME: Jesus was put on trial before the governor.

¹¹ Jesus stood in front of the governor. The governor asked him, "Do you *claim to be* the king of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "*It is as you have just said.*"

¹² When he was accused by the chief priests and elders {When the chief priests and elders accused him} about various things, he did not answer. ¹³ So Pilate said to him, "You hear how many things they are saying to accuse you; *are you not*

going to reply?" ¹⁴ But even though he was not guilty, Jesus did not say anything. He did not reply to any of the things about which they were accusing him. As a result, the governor was very surprised.

¹⁵ It was the governor's custom *each year* during the *Passover* celebration to release *one person who was in prison. He released whatever prisoner the people wanted.* ¹⁶ At that time there was *in Jerusalem* a well-known prisoner whose name was Barabbas. ¹⁷ So when the crowd gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which *prisoner* would you like me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus, whom *some of you* claim to be the Messiah?" ¹⁸ He asked that question because he realized that the chief priests *wanted to have Jesus executed.* They had brought Jesus to him *only* because they were jealous of Jesus. *And Pilate thought that the crowd would prefer that he release Jesus.*

¹⁹ While Pilate was sitting on the platform *where he made judicial decisions,* his wife sent him *this message:* "Early this morning I had a bad dream because of that man. So do not condemn that righteous man!"

²⁰ But the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd to ask *Pilate to release Barabbas,* and to *order* that Jesus be executed {that *his soldiers* execute Jesus}. ²¹ So when the governor asked them, "Which of the two men do you want me to release for you?" they replied, "Barabbas!" ²² Pilate, *very astonished,* asked, "So what shall I do with Jesus who *some of you* say is the Messiah?" They all answered, "*Command that he be crucified!* {*Command your soldiers* <to crucify him/to nail him to a cross>}!" ²³ Pilate replied, "Why? What crime has he committed?" But they shouted even louder, "*Have him crucified* {*Command that your soldiers* crucify him}!"

²⁴ Pilate realized that he was accomplishing nothing. He saw that instead, the people were starting to riot. So he took a *basin of water* and washed his hands as the crowd was watching. He said, "*By washing my hands I am showing you that if this man dies [MTY], it is your fault, not mine!*" ²⁵ And all the people answered, "The guilt for causing him to die [MTY] will be on us, and it will be on our children, too!" ²⁶ Then he *ordered the soldiers to release Barabbas* for them. But he *ordered that his soldiers* whip Jesus. And then he turned Jesus over to the soldiers for them <to nail Jesus to a cross/to crucify him>.

Matthew 27:27-31

THEME: *The soldiers made fun of Jesus before taking him to be crucified.*

²⁷ Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the government headquarters. The whole <cohort/group of soldiers> gathered around him. ²⁸ They pulled off *his clothes,* and *pretending he was a king,* they put a purple robe on him. ²⁹ They *took some branches with thorns* and wove them to make a crown and put it on his head. They put in his right hand a reed *like a staff that a king would hold.* Then they knelt in front of him and made fun of him, saying, "Hooray for the king of the Jews [IRO]!" ³⁰ They kept spitting on him. They took the staff and kept striking him on the head with it. ³¹ When they had finished ridiculing him, they pulled off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to *the place where they would nail him to a cross.*

Matthew 27:32-44

THEME: *Jesus was crucified, along with two bandits.*

³² After Jesus carried his cross a short distance, *the soldiers* saw a man named Simon, *who was* from Cyrene city. They forced him to carry the cross for Jesus. ³³ They came to a place called Golgotha. That name means 'the place *like* a skull.' ³⁴ When *they got there,* they mixed with wine something that tasted very bitter. They gave it to Jesus to drink *so that he would not feel so much pain when they nailed him on the cross.* But when he tasted it, he refused to drink it. *Some soldiers took his clothes.* ³⁵ Then they nailed him to the cross. Afterwards, they divided his clothes among themselves by gambling with something like dice *to decide which piece of clothing each one would get.* ³⁶ Then the soldiers sat down there to guard him, *to prevent anyone from trying to rescue him.* ³⁷ They fastened to the cross above Jesus' head a *sign on which had been {they had} written why they were nailing him to the cross. But all it said was, 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.'* ³⁸ Two bandits were also nailed {They also nailed two bandits} on crosses. One was nailed to a cross on the right side of Jesus and one to a cross on the left side. ³⁹ The people who were passing by insulted him by shaking their heads *as if he were an evil man.* ⁴⁰ They said, "You said you would destroy the Temple, and then you would build it again within three days! *So if you could do that, you should be able to save yourself!* If you are the man who is also God (OR, If you are the Son of God), come down from the cross!"

⁴¹ Similarly, the chief priests, the men who taught the *Jewish* laws and the elders made fun of him. *Various ones of them* said things like, ⁴² "He *claims that he saved others [IRO] from their sicknesses,* but he cannot help himself!" "He says that he is [IRO] the King of Israel. So he should come down from the cross. Then we would believe him!" ⁴³ "He says that he trusts in God, and that he is the man who is also God. So if God is pleased with him, God should rescue him now!" ⁴⁴ And the *two bandits* who had been crucified with him also insulted him, saying similar things.

Matthew 27:45-56

THEME: *When Jesus died at about three o'clock, several unusual events occurred.*

⁴⁵ At noon it became dark over the whole land. *It stayed dark* until three o'clock *in the afternoon.* ⁴⁶ At about three o'clock Jesus shouted loudly, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" That means, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' ⁴⁷ When

some of the people standing there heard *the word 'Eli', misunderstanding it*, they said, "He is calling for *the prophet Elijah!*"⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with sour wine. Then he put the sponge on *the tip of a reed and held it up in order that Jesus could suck out the wine that was in it.*⁴⁹ But the other *people there* said, "Wait! Let's see if Elijah comes to save him!"⁵⁰ Then after Jesus shouted out loudly again, he died [EUP], giving his spirit over *to God.*⁵¹ At that moment the *heavy thick curtain that closed off the most holy place* in the Temple split into two pieces from top to bottom. *That signified that ordinary people could now go into the presence of God.* The earth shook, and *some large rocks* split open.⁵² *Some tombs* opened up, and the bodies of many godly people who had died became alive again.⁵³ They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus became alive again, they went into Jerusalem and appeared to many people *there.*

⁵⁴ The officer who supervised the soldiers *who nailed Jesus to the cross was standing nearby.* His soldiers who had been on guard *so that no one would rescue Jesus were also there.* When they *felt* the earthquake and saw all the *other* things that happened, they were terrified. They exclaimed, "Truly he was both man and God! (OR, a Son of God)."

⁵⁵ Many women were there, watching from a distance. They were women who had accompanied Jesus from Galilee *district* in order to provide the things he needed.⁵⁶ Among these women were Mary from Magdala *town, another* Mary who was the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of James and John.

Matthew 27:57-61

THEME: *Jesus was buried.*

⁵⁷ When it was *almost* evening, a rich man named Joseph came *there.* He was from Arimathea *town.* He also was a disciple of Jesus.⁵⁸ He then went to Pilate and asked Pilate to *allow him to take* the body of Jesus *and bury it.* Pilate ordered that *he* be allowed to *{his soldiers let Joseph}* take *the body.*⁵⁹ So Joseph *and others* took the body and wrapped it in a clean white cloth.⁶⁰ Then they placed it in Joseph's own new tomb that had been dug out of the rock *cliff.* They rolled a huge *circular flat* stone in front of the entrance to the tomb. Then they left.⁶¹ Mary from Magdala *town* and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb, *watching.*

Matthew 27:62-66

THEME: *The religious leaders arranged for Jesus' tomb to be sealed and guarded.*

⁶² The next day was Saturday, the Jewish day of rest. The chief priests and *some of* the Pharisees went to Pilate.⁶³ They said, "Sir, we remember that while that deceiver was still alive, he said, 'Three days after I *die* I will become alive again.'⁶⁴ So we ask you to order that the tomb be guarded *{that soldiers guard the tomb}* for three days. If you do not do that, his disciples may come and steal the body. Then they will tell people that he has risen from the dead. If they deceive *people by saying that,* it will be worse than the way he deceived people before *by saying that he was the Messiah.*"⁶⁵ Pilate replied, "You *can* take some soldiers. Go to the tomb and make it as secure as you know how."⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by *fastening a cord from* the stone *that was in front of the entrance to the rock cliff on each side* and sealing it. They also *left some soldiers there to guard the tomb.*

Matthew 28:1-10

THEME: *After an angel appeared to several women and showed them the tomb was empty, Jesus appeared to them.*

28 ¹ After *<the Sabbath/the Jewish day of rest> ended,* on Sunday morning at dawn, Mary from Magdala *town* and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.² Suddenly there was a strong earthquake. *At the same time* an angel from God came down from heaven. He *went to the tomb and* rolled the stone away *from the entrance so that everyone could see that the tomb was empty.* Then he sat on the stone.³ His appearance was *as bright* [SIM] as lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow.⁴ The guards shook because they were very afraid. Then they became *completely motionless,* as though they were dead.

⁵ The angel said to the two women, "You should not be afraid! I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was *{whom they} <nailed to a cross/crucified>.*⁶ He is not here! *God* has *<caused him to be alive again/raised him from the dead>*, just like *Jesus* told you *would happen!* Come and see the place where his body lay!⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has risen from the dead! He will go ahead of you to Galilee *district.* You will see him there.'⁸ *Pay attention to what* I have told you!"

⁸ So the women left the tomb quickly. They were afraid, but they were *also* very joyful. They ran to tell us disciples *what had happened.*⁹ Suddenly, *as they were running,* Jesus appeared to them. He said, "Greetings!" The women came close to him. They knelt down and clasped his feet and worshipped him.¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid! Go and tell *<all my disciples/all those who have been accompanying me>* that they should go to Galilee. They will see me there."

Matthew 28:11-15

THEME: What the guards were told to tell people about why Jesus' body was gone.

¹¹ While the women were going, some of the soldiers who had been guarding *the tomb* went into the city. They reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹² So the chief priests and Jewish elders met together. They made a plan *to explain why the tomb was empty*. They gave the soldiers a lot of money *as a bribe*. ¹³ They said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came during the night and stole his *body* while we were sleeping.' ¹⁴ If the governor hears [MTY] about this, we ourselves will make sure that he does not get angry *and punish you*. *So you will not have to worry*." ¹⁵ So the soldiers took the money and did as they were told {as *the chief priests and elders* told them}. And this story has been told {People have told this story} among the Jews to the very day *that I am writing* this.

Matthew 28:16-20

THEME: Jesus appeared to the apostles in Galilee and gave them final instructions.

¹⁶ *Later* we eleven *disciples* went to Galilee *district*. We went to the mountain where Jesus had told *us* to go. ¹⁷ We saw him *there* and worshipped him. But some of *us* doubted *that it was really Jesus, and that he had become alive again*. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came *close to us* and said, "*My Father* has given me all authority over everything and everyone in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ So go, and *using my authority, teach my message* to people of all ethnic groups so that they may become my disciples. Baptize them *to be under the authority of* [MTY] my Father, and of me, his Son, and of the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember that I will be with you always, until the end of *this* age."

The Gospel that was written by Mark

Mark 1:1-8

THEME: *The good message about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, began when John, the Baptizer, as was prophesied long ago, announced the coming of Jesus.*

1¹⁻² *<This is/I want to tell you>* the good message about Jesus Christ, the Son of God (OR, the man who was also God). *What I want to tell you* begins just like the prophet Isaiah said it would begin, when he wrote these words that God said to his Son:

Listen! I am sending my messenger ahead of you. He will prepare *people for your coming*.³ He will call out to people *who pass by where he is* in the desolate area, "As people straighten out pathways *before an important official arrives* [MET], make yourselves ready [DOU] *in order that you will be prepared when the Lord comes*."

⁴ *The messenger that Isaiah predicted was John. People called him 'The Baptizer'.* In the desolate area *near the Jordan River* he kept telling people, "If you want God to forgive you for having sinned, you must turn away from your sinful behavior *before you ask me to baptize you*."⁵ A great number [HYP] of people who lived in Jerusalem city and elsewhere in Judea district were going out to where John was. There, *after hearing John's message*, they responded by confessing the sinful things *that they had done*. Then they were being baptized by John {John was baptizing them} in the Jordan River.⁶ John wore *rough* clothes made of camel's hair. And *as the prophet Elijah had done*, he wore a leather belt around his waist; and what he ate was *only* grasshoppers and honey *that he found* in that desolate area.⁷ He was preaching, "Very shortly a man will come who is very great. *I am nothing compared to him. Because he is so superior to me*, I am not even worthy to *serve him like a slave* by stooping down and untying his sandals.⁸ I used *only* water when I baptized you *because you said that you wanted to change your lives*, but he will put his Holy Spirit *within you to truly change your lives*."

Mark 1:9-13

THEME: *God showed Jesus to be the Son of God by God's Spirit descending upon him; by Himself, God the Father, declaring it; by Satan testing him; and by the angels taking care of him.*

⁹ During that time *when John was preaching*, Jesus came from Nazareth town, which is in Galilee district. He went to *where John was preaching* and he was baptized by John {John baptized him} in the Jordan River.¹⁰ Immediately after Jesus came up out of the water, he saw heaven opened up *and he saw* the Spirit of God descending on himself. He came in the form of a dove.¹¹ And God [MTY] spoke to him from heaven saying, "You are my Son, the one whom I love dearly. I am very pleased with you."¹² *<Then/Right away>* the Spirit of God sent Jesus into the desolate area.¹³ He was there for forty days. During that time, he was tempted by Satan {Satan tempted him}. There were wild animals *there* also. But angels took care of him.

Mark 1:14-15

THEME: *After John was arrested, Jesus came and preached the good message that came from God.*

¹⁴ Later, after John was put in prison {after soldiers put John in prison} *because he had rebuked the governor Herod Antipas for his sins*, Jesus went to Galilee district. There he was preaching the good message *that came from God*.¹⁵ He was repeatedly saying, "Now is the time when God will begin to rule people's lives *in a new way*. So turn away from your sinful behavior! Believe the good message *in order <to belong to him/to become those whose lives he will rule>!*"

Mark 1:16-20

THEME: *Jesus showed his authority when he summoned four men, and they immediately went with him.*

¹⁶ *One day*, while Jesus was walking along by Galilee lake, he saw *two men*, Simon and Simon's younger brother, Andrew. They were casting their *fishing* net into the lake. They *earned money* by catching *and selling* fish.¹⁷ Then Jesus said to them, "*Just like you have been gathering fish*, come with me and I will *teach* you how to *gather people to become my disciples*" [MET].¹⁸ Immediately they abandoned *the work that they were doing* with their nets, and they went with him.¹⁹ After they had gone on a little further, Jesus saw *two other men*, James and James' younger brother, John. They were the sons of a man named Zebedee. They were both in a boat mending *fishing* nets.²⁰ As soon as Jesus saw them, he told them that *they should leave their work and to come with him*. So they left their father, *who remained* in the boat with the hired servants, and they went away with Jesus.

Mark 1:21-28

THEME: *People were amazed as a result of Jesus expelling a demon from a man.*

²¹ Later Jesus and those disciples arrived at Capernaum town. On the next <Sabbath/Jewish rest day>, after Jesus had entered <the synagogue/the Jewish meeting place>, he began teaching *the people who had gathered there*. ²² They were continually amazed at the way he taught. *He did not just teach what others had taught*, like the men who teach the Jewish laws did. *They habitually just repeated what other people had taught*. Instead, he taught with *his own authority*. ²³ Suddenly, *while he was teaching*, a man *appeared* in their worship place who had an evil spirit in him, and he shouted, ²⁴ “Jesus, from Nazareth town, since we *evil spirits* have nothing in common with you, <do not interfere with us!/what do you want with us evil spirits?> [RHQ] <Do not destroy us now!/Have you come to destroy us now?> [RHQ] I know who you are. I know that you are the holy one *who has come from God!*” ²⁵ Jesus rebuked *the evil spirit*, saying, “Be quiet! And come out of the man!” ²⁶ The evil spirit shook the man hard. He screamed loudly, and then he came out of the man *and left*. ²⁷ *All the people who were there* were amazed. As a result, they discussed this among themselves, *exclaiming*, “<This is *amazing!*/What is this?> [RHQ] Not only does he teach in a new and authoritative way, but also the evil spirits obey him *when he commands them!*” ²⁸ The people very soon told *many others* throughout the whole Galilee district what Jesus *had done*.

Mark 1:29-31

THEME: *Jesus healed Simon’s mother-in-law.*

²⁹ After they left <the synagogue/the Jewish meeting place>, *Jesus, Simon and Andrew*, along with James and John went directly to the house of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon’s mother-in-law was lying in bed because she had a *high fever*. Right away someone told Jesus about her *being sick*. ³¹ He went to her, and helped her up by taking hold of her hand. She recovered *at once* from the fever, and then she *got up and served them some food*.

Mark 1:32-34

THEME: *Jesus healed many people and expelled many evil spirits from people.*

³² That evening, after the sun had gone down *and restrictions about travel* <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day> were ended, some people brought to Jesus many people who were sick and others whose lives evil spirits were controlling. ³³ *It seemed as though* everyone [HYP, MTY] *who lived in the town* was gathered at the doorway of *Simon’s house*. ³⁴ Jesus healed many people who were ill with various diseases. He also expelled many demons *from people*. He did not allow the demons to tell people *about him*, because they knew that he *had come from God, and for various reasons he did not want everyone to know that yet*.

Mark 1:35-39

THEME: *Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, preaching and expelling evil spirits from people.*

³⁵ Jesus arose very early *the next morning* while it was still dark. He left *the house* and went away *from the town* to a place where there were no people. Then he prayed there. ³⁶ Simon and his companions searched for him. When they found him, *wanting him to go back to town to help other people*, they said to him, ³⁷ “Come back to the town with us, because many [HYP] people *in Capernaum* are looking for you!” ³⁸ He said to them, “No, let’s go on to the neighboring towns in order that I can preach there also, because the reason that I came *into the world* was to *preach to people in many places!*” ³⁹ So they went throughout Galilee *district*. *As they did so, each* <Sabbath/Jewish rest day> he preached in <synagogues/Jewish meeting places>. He was also expelling evil spirits *from people*.

Mark 1:40-45

THEME: *Jesus cured a leper and arranged for him to be able to associate with people again.*

⁴⁰ *One day* a man who had a *bad skin disease called leprosy* came to Jesus. He knelt down in front of Jesus and then he pleaded with him saying, “Please heal me, because I know you are able to heal me if you want to!” ⁴¹ Jesus felt very sorry for him. *So he ignored the religious laws about coming close to people who had that disease*. He reached out his hand and touched the man. Then he said to him, “Since I am willing to *heal you*, be healed {I heal you} *now!*” ⁴² Immediately the man was healed! He was no longer a leper! ⁴³ Jesus spoke sternly to him before he sent him away. ⁴⁴ What Jesus said was, “Go to a local priest and show yourself to him *in order that he may examine you and verify that you are healed*. Then, *after the priest tells the local people*, they will know that you have been healed, and you will be able to associate with them again. Make sure that you do not tell others *about what happened!* Then go to *Jerusalem* and take to the priest what Moses commanded that *people who have been healed from leprosy should offer, in order that he may offer it as a sacrifice to God.*” ⁴⁵ The man went *and presented himself to the priest*. But then he began to tell many people about *how Jesus had healed him* [DOU]. As a result, Jesus was no longer able to enter any town publicly *because the crowds would surround him*. Instead, he remained outside *the towns* in places *where no people lived*. But people kept coming to him from all over that region.

Mark 2:1-12

THEME: *By healing a paralyzed man Jesus demonstrated his authority to forgive sins as well as to heal.*

2 ¹ Jesus and his disciples returned to Capernaum town. A few days later, because it was {people} heard that Jesus was in his house, ² many people gathered there. As a result, *after the people filled the house*, there was no longer space to stand *in the house or around the doorway outside*. Jesus preached God's message to them. ³ Some people came to the house bringing to Jesus a man who was paralyzed. He was carried by four men {Four men carried him} *on a sleeping pad*. ⁴ They were not able to bring the man to Jesus because there was a crowd there. So they *went up the steps to the flat roof and removed some of the tiles above* where Jesus was. Then, after they made a *big hole in the roof*, they lowered *by ropes* the sleeping pad on which the paralyzed man lay. They lowered *it through the hole, down in front of Jesus*. ⁵ After Jesus perceived that the men believed *that he could heal this man*, he said to the paralyzed man, "My friend, *I forgive your sins!*" ⁶ There were some men who taught *the Jewish laws* sitting there. They started deliberating within themselves like this: ⁷ "Who does this man think he is, talking like that [RHQ]? <He is insulting God!/Does he think he is God?> [RHQ] <No person can forgive sins!/Who can forgive sins?> [RHQ] Only God can forgive sins!" ⁸ Jesus knew right away within himself that they were deliberating like that within themselves. So he said to them, "<You should not question within yourselves *whether I have the right to forgive this man's sins!* Why do you question *whether I have the right to forgive this man's sins?*> [RHQ] ⁹ It is *not risky* [RHQ] for someone to tell the man who is paralyzed, 'Your sins are forgiven {I forgive your sins}, *because no one can prove that it has happened*. But no one would say to him, 'Get up, pick up your stretcher, and then walk away', *unless he really had the power to heal him, because people can easily see whether it happens or not*. ¹⁰ So *I will do something* in order that you may know that God has authorized me, the one who came from heaven, to forgive sins on earth *as well as to heal people*." Then he said to the paralyzed man, ¹¹ "To you I say, 'Get up! Pick up your sleeping pad! And then go home!'" ¹² The man stood up immediately! He picked up the sleeping pad, and then he went away, while all the people *there* were watching. They were all amazed, and they praised God and said, "We have never before seen anything like *what happened* just now!"

Mark 2:13-17

THEME: *Jesus invited Levi to be his disciple and refuted those who objected to his associating with such people.*

¹³ Jesus left Capernaum town again and walked *with his disciples* alongside Galilee lake. A large crowd came to him. Then he taught them. ¹⁴ As he walked on further, he saw a man named Levi, *whose other name was Matthew*, and whose father's name was Alpheus. He was sitting in his office where he collected taxes *for the Roman government*. Jesus said to him, "Come with me *and become my disciple!*" So he got up and went with Jesus.

¹⁵ *Later*, Jesus was eating a meal in Levi's house. Many men who collected taxes and *other people* who were *considered to be* sinning regularly were eating with Jesus and his disciples. *This was not surprising*, for there were many people like this who were going *everywhere* with Jesus. ¹⁶ The *men who taught the Jewish laws who were there* and who were members of the Pharisee sect saw that Jesus was eating with men who collected taxes and *others who were considered {whom they considered} to be* sinners. So they said to his disciples, "<It is disgusting that he eats with *such disgusting* men as those who collect taxes, and with *other sinners!* Why is it that he eats with *such disgusting* men as those who collect taxes, and with *other sinners?*>" [RHQ] ¹⁷ After Jesus heard *what they were saying*, he said to the men who taught the Jewish laws, "People who *consider that they* are well do not seek a doctor. On the contrary, it is those who are sick *who seek a doctor* [MET]!" *This he said to indicate that it was those who knew that they had sinned who were coming to him in order that he might help them spiritually*. And he said, "I did not come to invite people *who think that* [IRO] they are righteous to come to me and turn from their sinful behavior. On the contrary, I came *from heaven to invite* people who know that they are sinners, *in order that they might turn from their sins and come to me*."

Mark 2:18-22

THEME: *Jesus told them it was inappropriate for his disciples to show sorrow by fasting while he was with them, and that requiring people to perform rituals like fasting was inconsistent with the new way of life he was bringing.*

¹⁸ The disciples of John the Baptizer and some men who belonged to the Pharisee sect used to abstain from food *to show that they wanted to please God*. One day, some people came to Jesus and asked him *critically*, "The disciples of John and the Pharisees <fast/abstain from food> *from time to time*, but your disciples do not. *We think they should abstain from food also. What do you say about that* [RHQ]?" ¹⁹ Jesus wanted them to understand that it was *not appropriate for his disciples to show sorrow by abstaining from food while he was still with them*. So he said to them, "When a man is marrying a woman, his friends will certainly not abstain from food while he is still with them, will they [RHQ]? No. During the time that he is with them, they will not abstain from food *because they are happy together*. ²⁰ But some day, he will be taken away {his enemies will take him away} from them. Then, in those days, they will abstain from food, *because they will be sad*."

²¹ Jesus wanted to show that those who desire to live in accordance with his new message should not try to continue to obey the old religious traditions like fasting. So he also said to them, "People do not sew a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment *in order to mend a hole*. If they did that, *when they washed the garment, the patch would shrink* and the new piece of cloth would tear off more of the old cloth. As a result, the hole would become bigger!" ²² Similarly, people do not put newly squeezed grape juice into old skin bags *to store it*. If they did that, that juice will burst the skin bags *because they*

would not stretch when the wine ferments and expands. As a result both the wine and the skin bags would be ruined! On the contrary, people must put new wine into new skin bags!" [MET]

MARK 2:23-28

THEME: *When the Pharisees complained about Jesus' disciples plucking grain on the Sabbath day, Jesus replied that there was Scriptural precedent for ignoring religious laws if there was a physical need, and that he is the one to decide what people should do on the Sabbath.*

²³ On one <Sabbath/Jewish day of rest> Jesus was walking through some grain fields with his disciples. As they were walking along *through the grain fields*, the disciples were plucking some of the heads of grain. *They rubbed them in their hands to remove the chaff, and were eating the grain. The laws of Moses permitted people to do that if they were hungry.* ²⁴ Some of the Pharisees saw them doing what they considered to be work. So they said to him, "Look! <They should not be doing on our <Sabbath day/day of rest> work that our laws forbid!/Why are they doing on our <Sabbath day/day of rest> work that our laws forbid?> [RHQ]" ²⁵ Jesus wanted to show them that the record in the Scriptures indicated that God permitted people to disobey certain religious laws when they needed food. So he said to them, "*It is written in the Scriptures what our revered ancestor, King David, did when he needed food, and both he and the men with him were hungry. You have read about that, but <you do not think about what it implies./why do you not think about what it implies?> [RHQ]*" ²⁶ During the time Abiathar was high priest, David entered the big tent *where people worshipped God and asked for some bread. The high priest gave him some of the loaves of bread. That bread was the bread he had presented to God. It was permitted in one of Moses' laws that only the priests could eat that bread! But David ate some of it. Then he also gave some of it to the men who were with him. But God did not consider that was wrong!*" ²⁷ Jesus said to them further, "*God established <the day of rest/the Sabbath day> to help people! He did not create people to obey rules about <the Sabbath/the day of rest>!*" ²⁸ And think about this: I am the one who came from heaven. So I have the authority to determine what is right for my disciples to do <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day>!

MARK 3:1-6

THEME: *After Jesus healed a man with a withered arm on the Sabbath, Jewish leaders began to plan to kill him.*

3 ¹ On another <Sabbath/Jewish day of rest>, Jesus entered <the synagogue/the Jewish meeting place> again. There was a man there whose hand was shriveled. ² Some men of the Pharisee sect watched him carefully in order to see whether he would heal the man <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day>. They did this in order that *if he healed the man*, they would accuse him of disobeying *their Jewish laws, because he worked <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day>*. ³ Jesus said to the man whose hand was shriveled, "Stand up here in front of everyone!" So the man stood up. ⁴ Then Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Do the laws that God gave Moses permit people to do good <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day>, or do they permit people to do evil? Specifically, do his laws permit us to save a person's life <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day>, or do they permit us to let him die by refusing to help him?" But they did not reply. ⁵ He looked around at them angrily. He was very distressed that they were stubbornly *not wanting to help the man*. So he said to the man, "Reach out your hand!" When the man reached out his withered hand, his hand became all right again! ⁶ Then the Pharisees decided to get rid of Jesus. So after they left the meeting house, they immediately met with some of the Jews who supported Herod Antipas, who ruled Galilee district. Together they planned how they could kill Jesus.

MARK 3:7-12

THEME: *Many people came from various areas to hear Jesus, because he had healed many.*

⁷ Jesus and his disciples left that town and went to an area further along Galilee lake in order to get away from the people. But a great crowd of people followed him. They were people who came from Galilee district, ⁸ from Jerusalem city, from other towns of Judea district, from Idumea district, from the region on the east side of the Jordan River, and from the region around Tyre and Sidon cities. This great crowd of people came to him because they heard about what he was doing. ⁹ ¹⁰ Because he had healed many people, many other people who had various illnesses pushed forward in order that by touching him they would come well. So he told his disciples that they should get a small boat ready for him to get in and teach from it. He wanted to do this in order that the crowd would not crush him when they pushed forward to touch him. ¹¹ Whenever the evil spirits saw Jesus, they caused the people whom they controlled to fall down in front of Jesus in recognition of Jesus' power. Then they exclaimed, "You are <the Son of God/the man who is also God>!" ¹² He commanded the evil spirits strongly that they should not tell anyone who he was.

MARK 3:13-19

THEME: *Jesus appointed the twelve apostles.*

¹³ Jesus went with many other people up into the hills. After he picked out from among them the men whom he wanted, they came close to him. ¹⁴ He appointed twelve men in order that they might be with him and in order that he might send them out to preach. He called them apostles. ¹⁵ He also gave them power in order that they might expel evil spirits from people. ¹⁶ These were the twelve men he appointed: Simon, to whom he gave the new name Peter; his younger brother Andrew; ¹⁷ James, the son of Zebedee, and John, the younger brother of James, to both of whom he added the new name,

'Men who are like Thunder' because of their fiery zeal; ¹⁸ Philip; Bartholomew; Levi, whose other name was Matthew; Thomas; another James, the son of Alphaeus; Thaddeus; another Simon, who was a member of the party that wanted to overthrow the Roman government; ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot (OR, from the town of Kerioth). He was the one who later <betrayed Jesus/helped Jesus' enemies seize him>.

MARK 3:20-30

THEME: Jesus explained why their claim that he was expelling evil spirits by Satan's power was ridiculous, and that such a claim was an unforgivable sin.

²⁰ Jesus along with his disciples went to the house where he was staying in Capernaum. Again a crowd gathered where he was. There were many people crowding around him, so that he and his disciples had no time when they could eat or when they could do anything else. ²¹ After his relatives heard about this, they went to take him home with them because <some people/they> were saying that he was insane.

²² Around that time some men who taught the Jewish laws came down from Jerusalem city. They heard that Jesus was expelling demons. So they were telling people, "Beelzebul, who rules the evil spirits, controls him. He is the one who enables this man to expel evil spirits from people!" ²³ Jesus summoned those men. Then he spoke to them in parables to enable them to realize that Satan would not oppose his own evil spirits. He also wanted them to realize that by expelling evil spirits, he was demonstrating that he was much more powerful than Satan. So he said, "<It is ridiculous to suggest that Satan would expel his own evil spirits!/Why would Satan expel his own evil spirits?> [RHQ]" ²⁴ If people who live in the same country are fighting one another, they will cease to be a single group under one ruler. ²⁵ And if people who live in the same house fight each other, they will certainly not remain as one family. ²⁶ Similarly, if Satan and his evil spirits were fighting one another, instead of remaining strong, he would become powerless. ²⁷ Contrary to what you say about me, someone can enter the house of a strong man like Satan and carry off his possessions only if he first ties up the strong man. Then and only then will he be able to steal the things in that man's house." ²⁸ Jesus also said, "Consider this carefully! People may sin in many ways and they may speak evilly about God, but if they then are sorry and ask God to forgive them, God can forgive them for doing that. ²⁹ But if anyone speaks evil words about what the Holy Spirit does, God will never forgive that. That person is eternally guilty of sin."

³⁰ Jesus told them that because they refused to admit that the Holy Spirit was helping him to expel demons. Instead, they were saying, "An evil spirit is controlling him!"

MARK 3:31-35

THEME: Jesus told them that those who obey God are as dear to him as his close relatives.

³¹ Jesus' mother and younger siblings arrived. While they stood outside, they sent someone inside in order to call him outside. ³² A crowd was sitting around Jesus. One of them said to him, "Listen/Hey, your mother and your younger brothers and sisters are outside, and they are wanting <to see/to talk with> you!" ³³ Jesus replied to them, "<I will tell you something about my mother and my brothers./Do you know whom I consider to be like my mother and my brothers?>" [RHQ] ³⁴ After he looked around at the disciples who were sitting around him in a circle, he said, "Look here! I love these men as much as I love my mother and my brothers. ³⁵ Those who habitually do what God wants are as dear to me [MET] as my brother, my sister, or my mother!"

MARK 4:1-25

THEME: Jesus taught the crowds by parables about the various ways that people who hear his message react.

4 ¹ Another time Jesus began to teach people alongside Lake Galilee. As he was doing that, a very large crowd gathered around him. Because people were jostling him, he got into a boat in the lake so that he could speak to the crowd better. Then he sat in it in order that he could teach the crowd from the boat. At the same time, the crowd was on the shore close to the lake. ² Then he taught them many parables. While he was teaching them, he told them this: ³ "Consider well the meaning of this illustration: A man/farmer went out to his field to sow some seeds. ⁴ As he was scattering them over the soil, some of the seeds fell on the path. Then some birds came and ate those seeds. ⁵ Other seeds fell on ground where there was not much soil on top of the rock. Very soon the seeds sprouted because the sun warmed the moist soil quickly where it was not deep. ⁶ But after the sun shone on those young plants, they became scorched. Then they withered because they did not have deep roots. ⁷ As he sowed, other seeds fell on ground that contained roots of thorny plants. The seeds grew, but the thorny plants also grew up and crowded out the good plants. So the plants produced no grain. ⁸ But as he sowed, other seeds fell on good soil. As a result, they sprouted, they grew well, and then they produced plenty of grain. Some plants bore 30 grains. Some bore 60 grains. Some bore 100 grains." ⁹ Then Jesus said, "If you want to understand this [MTY], you should consider carefully what I have just said."

¹⁰ Later, when only the twelve *disciples* and a few *other* people were with him, they asked him about the parables. ¹¹ He said to them, "People have not understood before *the new message* about how God wants to rule people's lives. It is to you that this is being made known {that I am making this known}. But I tell about this *only* <in parables/figuratively> to those who have not *yet invited God to rule their lives*. ¹² As a result *it is true what a prophet has written*,

Although they see *what I do*, they do not perceive *what it means* [DOU]. Although they hear *what I say*, they do not understand *what it means* [DOU]. So they do not <repent/turn away from their sinful behavior> in order that they would be forgiven {*God would forgive them*}."

¹³ He also said to them, "<*I am disappointed that you do not understand this illustration!/Can you not understand this illustration?*> [RHQ] *If you do not understand this*, <you will certainly not understand any of the *other* illustrations!/how will you understand any of the *other* illustrations?> [RHQ] *Nevertheless, I will explain it to you*. ¹⁴ *In the illustration that I told you*, the man who sows *seeds represents someone who* declares God's message [DOU]. ¹⁵ *Some people are like* the path on which *some of* the seeds fell. When they hear *the message*, Satan comes at once and causes them to forget what they have heard. ¹⁶ *Some people are like* the ground where the soil was not very deep over the rock. When they hear *God's message*, they immediately accept it with joy. ¹⁷ But, because *the message does not penetrate deeply* [MET] *into their hearts/inner beings*, they believe it for *only a short time*. They are like the plants that did not have deep roots. When others treat such people badly or cause them to suffer because *they believe*, those people *who are suffering* soon stop believing God's message. ¹⁸ *Some people are like* the soil that had roots of thorny weeds in it. *Although* those people hear *God's message*, ¹⁹ they desire to be rich, and they desire to own many other things. So they worry *only* about material things. The result is that they forget *God's message* and they do not do *the things that God wants them to do*. ²⁰ *But some people are like* the good soil. They hear *God's message* and they accept it *and they believe it*, *they do the things that God wants them to do*. *They are like the good plants that produced 30, 60 or 100 grains*."

²¹ He also told them *another parable*, saying, "<People certainly do not *light* an oil lamp and then bring it *in the house* in order that it may be put {someone may put it} under a container or under a bed./Would anyone *light* an oil lamp and then bring it *in the house* in order that it may be put {someone may put it} under a container or under a bed?> [RHQ] <No, *they light it* in order that it may be put {someone may put it} in a place where it *lights the house*./Wouldn't they *light it* in order that it may be put {someone may put it} in a place where it *lights the house*?> [RHQ] ²² *Similarly*, there are some *parts of God's message* that people do not know. *But he intends that* people will understand all the things that they do not know *now*. ²³ If you want to understand this, you should consider *carefully* what you *have just heard*."

²⁴ Then he said to them, "Consider *carefully* what you hear *me say to you*, for God will let you *understand* to the same degree that you *consider what I say*. He will let you *understand* even more than that. ²⁵ Those who *consider what I say* and understand it, *God* will enable them to understand more. But those who do not *consider carefully what I say*, they will forget even what they already know."

MARK 4:26-34

THEME: *Jesus told them two parables to show them how the number of people who will submit to God's rule over their lives will greatly increase.*

²⁶ Jesus also said, "God *has the power to change* people who let him rule their lives. *I will illustrate how that can happen* [MET]. A man planted seeds in the ground. ²⁷ Afterwards he slept each night and rose each day *without worrying about the seeds*. *During that time* the seeds sprouted and grew in a way that he did not understand, because by itself the soil *caused the plants to grow and produce grain*. ²⁸ First the stalks *appeared*. Then the heads *appeared*. Then the full kernels in the heads *appeared*. ²⁹ As soon as the grain was ripe he sent *people* [MTY] to harvest it because it was time to harvest *the grain*."

³⁰ *Jesus told them another parable*. He said, "I will tell you [RHQ] how the *number of people* whose lives God rules in a new way *will continue to grow* (OR, each continue to have more and more influence in this world). I hope [RHQ] that this illustration will show this *to you*. ³¹ *You know what happens to* mustard seeds when we plant them. Though mustard seeds are among the smallest of seeds, *here in Israel* they become large plants. ³² After they are planted, they grow up and become larger than the other garden plants. They put out big branches so that birds are able to make nests in their shade."

³³ Jesus used many such illustrations when he talked to the people about God. If they were able to understand *some*, *he kept telling them more*. ³⁴ He always used parables when he spoke to them. But he explained all *the illustrations* to his own disciples when he was alone with them.

MARK 4:35-41

THEME: *While Jesus and his disciples crossed the sea in a boat and while Jesus slept, a storm arose, so the disciples woke him and he calmed the storm.*

³⁵ On that same day, when the sun was setting, Jesus said to *his disciples*, "Let's cross over to the opposite side of *Lake Galilee in the boat*." ³⁶ So they left the crowd, *got in* the boat where Jesus *already was*, and left. *Other people* went with them in other boats. ³⁷ A strong wind came up and the waves started coming into the boat! The boat was soon nearly full of *water!* ³⁸ Jesus was in the back part of the boat. He was sleeping, *with his head* on a cushion. So they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher! <You ought to be concerned that we are about to perish!/Are you not concerned that we are about to perish?> [RHQ]" ³⁹ So Jesus got up and rebuked the wind. Then he said to the lake, "Be quiet! Be still! [DOU]" The wind

stopped blowing and then *the lake* became very calm. ⁴⁰ He said to the disciples, “*<I am disappointed that you are afraid like that!/Why are you afraid like that?>* [RHQ] Do you not yet believe *that I can protect you?*” ⁴¹ They were very awestruck. They said to one another, “*<What kind of man is he?/This man is not like ordinary men!>* [RHQ] *Not only do the demons obey him, but even the wind and the waves obey him!*”

MARK 5:1-20

THEME: *Jesus expelled evil spirits from a Gerasene man and then allowed them to enter a herd of pigs, which then ran down a hill and drowned. As a result, the local people asked Jesus to leave the area.*

5 ¹ Jesus and his disciples arrived on the east side of Lake Galilee. They landed near where the Gerasene people lived. ² There was a man in that region whom evil spirits controlled. ³ *Because that man was violent and people were afraid of him, they had tied him up many times. As he grew more violent, no one was able to tie him up any longer, not even with chains, ⁴ because the chains would be broken by him {he would break the chains} whenever he was bound {they bound him} with them. The iron shackles would also be smashed by him {He would also smash the iron shackles} whenever they were fastened {they fastened them} on his feet.* ⁵ He lived in one of the caves where they bury dead people. During both night and day he would scream among the caves and in the hills. He would also cut himself with sharp stones. *That day* he came out of the caves. ⁶ As Jesus and his disciples got out of the boat, that man saw Jesus from a distance. He immediately ran to Jesus, and then he knelt before him. ⁷⁻⁸ Jesus had been saying to the evil spirit, “You evil spirit, come out of this man!” *But the demon did not leave quickly.* It shouted very loudly, “Jesus, I know that you are the Son of God, so *<we have nothing in common./what do we have in common?>* [IDM, RHQ] *So leave me alone!* I ask you to promise, knowing God is listening, that you will not torture me now!” ⁹ So, in order to expel the demon more easily, Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” He replied, “My name is Crowd/Mob because there are many of us evil spirits in this man.” ¹⁰ Then the evil spirits fervently kept begging Jesus that he not send them out of the region. ¹¹ At the same time, a large herd of pigs was *<grazing/rooting for food>* nearby on the hillside. ¹² So the evil spirits pleaded with Jesus, “Allow us to go to the pigs in order that we might enter them!” ¹³ He permitted them to do that. So the evil spirits left the man and entered the pigs. The herd, which numbered about 2000, rushed down the cliff into the lake, and then they drowned in the lake.

¹⁴ The men who were tending the pigs ran and reported in the town and the countryside what had happened. Many people went to see what had happened. ¹⁵ They came to the place where Jesus was. Then they saw the man whom evil spirits had previously controlled. He was sitting there with clothes on and mentally sound. *As a result, they became afraid because they thought that he might destroy more of their property. (OR, they realized that Jesus must be very powerful.)* ¹⁶ The people who had seen what had happened described what had happened to the man whom the evil spirits previously controlled. They also described what had happened to the pigs. ¹⁷ Then the people pleaded with Jesus to leave their region.

¹⁸ As Jesus got in the boat in order to leave, the man whom the evil spirits previously controlled begged Jesus, “Please let me go with you!” ¹⁹ But Jesus did not let him go with him. On the contrary, he said to him, “Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord God has done for you, and tell them how God was kind to you.” ²⁰ So the man went and traveled around the Ten Towns district. He told people how much Jesus had done for him. All the people who heard what the man said were amazed.

MARK 5:21-43

THEME: *Jesus cured a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhaging and brought Jairus’ daughter back to life.*

²¹ Jesus and his disciples went in a boat back around Lake Galilee to where they were before. When they arrived at the shore of the lake, a large crowd gathered around Jesus. ²² One of the men who presided over a *<synagogue/Jewish meeting place>*, whose name was Jairus, came there. When he saw Jesus, he prostrated himself at his feet. ²³ Then he pleaded with Jesus earnestly, “My daughter is sick and nearly dead! Please come to my house and place your hands on her in order that she will be healed {to heal her}, so that she will not die!” ²⁴ So Jesus and the disciples went with him.

A large crowd followed Jesus and many pushed close to him. ²⁵ There was a woman in the crowd who had vaginal bleeding [EUP] every day for twelve years. ²⁶ She had suffered much while many doctors treated her. But although she had spent all her money to pay the doctors, she had not been helped {they had not helped her}. Instead, she had become worse [EUP]. ²⁷ After she heard that Jesus healed people, she came to where he was and pushed in the crowd close behind Jesus. ²⁸ She did that because she was thinking, “If I touch him or even if I touch his clothes, I will be healed {his power will heal me}.” So she touched Jesus’ clothes. ²⁹ At once her bleeding stopped. At the same time, she sensed within herself that she had been cured of {that he had cured} her illness. ³⁰ Jesus also immediately sensed within himself that his power had healed someone. So he turned around in the crowd and then he asked, “Who touched my clothes?” ³¹ One of his disciples replied, “You can see that many people are crowding close to you! Probably many people touched you! So *<why do you ask ‘Who touched me?/we are surprised that you ask ‘Who touched me?’>* [RHQ]” ³² But Jesus kept looking around in order to see the one who had done it. ³³ The woman was very afraid and trembling. *She thought that Jesus might be angry because she had violated the law that women who had such a sickness should not touch other people. But she knew that Jesus had healed her.* So she prostrated herself before him. Then she told him truthfully about what she had done. ³⁴ He said to her, “Ma’am/Young lady, because you have believed that I could heal you, I have now healed you. You may go home with peace in your heart, because I promise that you will not be sick this way anymore.”

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking *to that woman*, some people arrived who had come from Jairus' house. They said *to Jairus*, "Your daughter has *now* died. So <it is useless that you bother the teacher any longer *by urging him to go to your house!*/why do you bother the teacher any longer *by urging him to go to your house?*> [RHQ]" ³⁶ But when Jesus heard what these men said, he said to Jairus, "Do not think that the situation is hopeless! Just keep believing *that she will live!*" ³⁷⁻
³⁸ Then he allowed only *his three closest disciples*, Peter, James, and John, to go with him *to Jairus' house*. He did not allow any other people to go with him. After they arrived near the house, Jesus saw that the people there were in turmoil. They were weeping and wailing [DOU] loudly. ³⁹ He entered the house and then he said to them, knowing that *he was going to cause her to live again*, "<Do not make such a disturbance!/Why are you making such a disturbance?> [RHQ] Stop crying, for the child is not dead! On the contrary, she is *only* sleeping [HYP, EUP]!" ⁴⁰ The people laughed at him, *because they knew that she was dead*. But he sent all the other people outside the house. Then he took the child's father and mother and the *three disciples* who were with him. He went into *the room* where the child was *lying*. ⁴¹ He took hold of the child's hand and said to her *in her own language*, "Talitha, Koum!" That means, "Little girl, get up!" ⁴² At once the girl got up and walked around. (*It was not surprising that she could walk*, because she was twelve years old.) *When this happened, all who were present* were very astonished. ⁴³ Jesus ordered them strictly, "Do not tell anyone about *what I have done!*" Afterwards he told them that something to eat should be brought to her {that they should bring her something to eat}.

MARK 6:1-6a

THEME: *Jesus taught in the synagogue, and the people who heard him were amazed and offended.*

6 ¹ Jesus left *Capernaum city* and went to his home town, *Nazareth*. His disciples went with him. ² <On the Sabbath/On the Jewish rest day>, *he entered* the Jewish worship house and taught *the people*. Many who were listening to him were astonished. *But some* were saying, "*This man is just an ordinary person like we are! So <we cannot believe that this man is able to teach us* about these things and that he has been made very wise {that *God* has made him very wise} and that he is performing such miracles!*how is it that* [RHQ] *this man is able to teach us* about these things and that he has been made very wise {that *God* has made him very wise} and that he is performing such miracles?> [RHQ] ³ <*We know that he is just an ordinary carpenter!Isn't he just an ordinary carpenter* [RHQ]?> *We know him and his family! We know Mary his mother! <We know his younger brothers James, Joses, Judas and Simon!Are not his younger brothers James, Joses, Judas and Simon?>* [RHQ] And <*his younger sisters also live here with us!do not his younger sisters also live here with us?>* [RHQ]" So they despised him. ⁴ Jesus *knew that they refused to believe in him*. So he said to them, "*It is certainly true that people honor me and other prophets in other places, but not in our home towns! Even our relatives and the people who live in our own houses do not honor us!*"

⁵ So, although he healed a few sick people there by touching them, he *decided* not to perform many *other* miracles *in Nazareth because the people there did not believe that he was the Messiah*. ⁶ He was amazed that they did not believe in him.

MARK 6:6b-13

THEME: *Jesus began to send out his disciples two-by-two and gave them power and instructions.*

Jesus *and his disciples* went from town to town *in that region* teaching *the people*. ⁷ One day he summoned the twelve *disciples*, and then he *told them that* he was going to send them out two-by-two *to teach people in various towns*. He gave them power *to expel* evil spirits *from people*. ⁸⁻⁹ He also instructed them to wear sandals and to take along a walking stick when they were traveling. He told them not to take food, nor a bag *in which travelers carry supplies*, nor any money for their journey. He also did not allow them to take extra clothing. *He wanted the people who heard their message to give them what they needed*. ¹⁰ He also instructed them, "After you enter a town, *if someone invites you to stay in his house*, go into his house. Eat and sleep in that same home until you leave that town. ¹¹ Wherever the people do not welcome you and wherever the people do not listen to you, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave *that place*. By doing that, you will warn them *that God will punish them for rejecting your message*." ¹² So after the disciples went out *to various towns*, they were preaching that people should stop their sinful behavior. ¹³ They were also expelling many evil spirits *from people*, and they were anointing many sick people with *olive oil* and healing them.

MARK 6:14-29

THEME: *King Herod heard about Jesus and wondered if he were John, the Baptizer, come back after King Herod had ordered him to be executed due to the insistence of his wife, Herodias.*

¹⁴ King Herod *Antipas* heard about *what Jesus was doing*, because many people were talking *about it*. Some people were saying *about Jesus*, "*He must be John the Baptizer! He has risen from the dead! That is why he has God's power to perform these miracles!*" ¹⁵ Others were saying *about Jesus*, "*He is the former prophet Elijah, whom God promised to send back again.*" Others were saying *about Jesus*, "*No, he is a different prophet, like one of the other prophets who lived long ago.*" ¹⁶ Having heard *what the people were saying*, King Herod *Antipas* himself repeatedly said, "*The man performing those miracles must be John! I commanded my soldiers to cut off his head, but he has become alive again to get revenge for my killing him!*" ¹⁷ The reason *King Herod concluded that John wanted revenge is as follows: Sometime before this*, Herod married Herodias, while she was *still* the wife of his *younger* brother, Philip. ¹⁸ John kept telling Herod, "*God's law*

does not permit you to marry the wife of your brother *while he is still alive*.” Then, because Herodias *urged him to put John in prison*, Herod himself sent *soldiers to John*. They seized John and put him in prison. ¹⁹ But because Herodias wanted to get *further* revenge on John, she wanted *someone* to execute him. But she could not do that because *while John was in prison*, Herod kept John safe *from her*. ²⁰ Herod did this because he respected/feared John, because he knew that he was a righteous and holy man. The king did not know what he should do, but he liked to listen to him. ²¹ But *Herodias was able to have someone execute John when they honored/celebrated* the day when Herod was born. On that day, he invited the *most important* government officials, the *most important* army leaders, and the most important men in Galilee *district* in order that they might eat *and celebrate with him*. ²² *While they were eating*, Herodias’ daughter came into the room and, by dancing, she pleased King Herod and his guests. So the king said to her, “Ask me for whatever you desire and I will give it to you!” ²³ He also said to her, “Whatever you ask, I will give it to you! I will give you up to half of what I own and rule, if you ask for it. May God punish me *if I do not do what I have promised!*” ²⁴ The girl immediately left the room and went to her mother. She *told her what the king had said*, and asked her, “What shall I ask for?” Her mother replied, “*Ask the king to give you the head of John the Baptizer!*” ²⁵ The girl quickly entered the room again. She went to the king and she requested, “I want you to command someone to *cut off* the head of John the Baptizer *and give it to me at once on a platter, so that my mother can know he is dead!*” ²⁶ The king became very distressed *when he heard what she asked for because he knew John was a very righteous man* (OR, *because he now knew that he should not have made that promise to her*). But he could not refuse *what she requested because* he had promised *that he would give her anything she asked for*, and because his guests *had heard him promise that*. ²⁷ So the king at once ordered the man who executes prisoners to go and *cut off* John’s head and bring it *to the girl*. That man went to the prison and cut off John’s head. ²⁸ He *put it on* a platter, brought it back, and gave it to the girl. The girl took it to her mother. ²⁹ After John’s disciples heard *what happened*, they went to *the prison* and took John’s body and then they buried *it in a burial cave*.

MARK 6:30-34

THEME: *The apostles returned to Jesus to report what they had done. Then they all went off to a lonely place, but many people followed them.*

³⁰ The *twelve* apostles returned to Jesus *from the places to which they had gone*. They reported to him what they had done and what they had taught *to people*. ³¹ He said to them, “Come *with me* to a place where no people are living, in order that we can be alone and rest a little while!” *He said this* because many people were continually coming to them and going *away again*, with the result that *Jesus and his disciples* did not have time to eat *or do anything else*. ³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a place where no people were living. ³³ *But many* people saw them leaving. They also recognized *that they were Jesus and the disciples, and they saw where they were going*. So they ran *ahead on land* from all the *nearby* towns to the place *where Jesus and his disciples were going*. They *actually* arrived there before *Jesus and the disciples*. ³⁴ As *Jesus and his disciples* got out of the boat, Jesus saw this great crowd. He felt sorry for them because they were *confused*, like sheep that do not have a shepherd. So he taught them many things.

MARK 6:35-44

THEME: *When it became late in the afternoon the people became hungry and there was no place to obtain food; as a result, Jesus miraculously provided food for them.*

³⁵ Late *in the afternoon* the disciples came to him and said, “This is a place where no people live and it is very late. ³⁶ So send the people away in order that they may go to the surrounding places *where people live* and to the villages in order that they can buy for themselves something to eat!” ³⁷ But he replied to them, “*No, you yourselves* give them something to eat!” They replied to him, “*◀We could not buy enough bread to feed this crowd, even if we had as much money as a man earns by working 200 days! How could we buy enough bread to feed this mob, even if we had as much money as a man earns by working 200 days?▶*” [RHQ] ³⁸ But he replied to them, “How many loaves of bread do you have? Go and find out!” They *went and* found out and then they told him, “We have *only five flat loaves and two cooked fish!*” ³⁹ He instructed *the disciples to tell* all the people to sit down on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So the people sat in groups. There were 50 people in some groups and 100 people in other groups. ⁴¹ Jesus took the five flat loaves and the two fish. He looked up towards heaven and thanked *God* for them. Then he broke the loaves and fish into pieces and kept giving them to the disciples in order that they would distribute them to the people. ⁴² Everyone ate *this food* until they all had enough to eat! ⁴³ The disciples then collected twelve baskets full of pieces *of bread* and of the fish *that were left over*. ⁴⁴ There were approximately five thousand men who ate the bread *and fish*. *They did not even count the women and children*.

MARK 6:45-52

THEME: *Jesus sent his disciples ahead of him to Bethsaida by boat while he stayed to pray. Later he saw that they were in difficulty due to a wind blowing against them so he went to them, walking on the water.*

⁴⁵ Right away Jesus told his disciples to get into the boat and then go ahead of him to Bethsaida *town, which was further* around *Lake Galilee*. He *stayed and* dismissed the many people who were there. ⁴⁶ After he said good-bye to the people, he went up into the hills in order to pray. ⁴⁷ When it was evening, the *disciples’* boat was in the middle of the lake and Jesus was by himself on the land. ⁴⁸ He saw that the wind was *blowing* against them as they rowed. As a result, they were having great difficulty. He approached them early in the morning, when it was still dark, by walking on the water. He intended to walk by them. ⁴⁹ They saw him walking on the water, but they thought that he was a ghost. They screamed ⁵⁰ because they

all were terrified when they saw him. But he talked to them. He said to them, "Be calm! Do not be afraid, *because it is I!*"⁵¹ He got into the boat *and sat down* with them and the wind stopped blowing. They were completely amazed *about what he had done*.⁵² *Although they had seen Jesus multiply the bread and the fish*, they did not understand *from that how powerful he was, as they should have*. They did not think clearly about it.

MARK 6:53-56

THEME: *As soon as Jesus and his disciples reached land and disembarked, people began to come to Jesus, bringing sick people in order that he might heal them, and he healed all who touched him.*

⁵³ After they went further around *Lake Galilee in a boat*, they came to the shore at Gennesaret town. Then they fastened the boat there. ⁵⁴ As soon as they got out of the boat, *the people there* recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵ So they ran throughout the whole district *in order to tell others that Jesus was there*. Then the people *placed* those who were sick on stretchers and carried them to any place where they heard *people say* that Jesus was. ⁵⁶ In whatever village, town or other place where he entered, they would bring to the marketplaces those who were sick. Then the *sick people* would beg Jesus to let them touch *him or even the edge of his clothes in order that Jesus might heal them*. All those who touched *him or his robe* were healed.

MARK 7:1-23

THEME: *Some Pharisees and scribes criticized Jesus about his disciples disobeying the traditions of the elders. Jesus replied, showing that their attitudes and practices were mistaken.*

7 ¹ One day some Pharisees and some men who teach the *Jewish laws* gathered around Jesus. They had come from Jerusalem to *investigate him*.²⁻⁴ The Pharisees and all of the *other Jews strictly* observe their traditions that their ancestors *taught*. For example, they *refuse to eat* until they first wash their hands *with a special ritual*, especially after they *return from buying things in the marketplace*. They think that *God will be angry with them if they do not do that, because some person or thing unacceptable to God might have touched* <them/the things they bought>. There are many other such *traditions* that they accept and try to obey. Specifically, they wash *in a special way* their cups, pots, kettles, containers, and beds *in order that using these things will not make God reject them*.

⁵ That day, those Pharisees and men who taught the *Jewish laws* saw that some of his disciples were eating food with hands that they had not washed *using the special ritual*. So they questioned Jesus, saying, "*Your disciples disobey the traditions of our ancestors! <You should not let them eat food if they have not washed their hands using our special ritual!/Why do you let them eat food if they have not washed their hands using our special ritual?> [RHQ]*"⁶ Jesus said to them, "*Isaiah rebuked your ancestors, and his words describe very well you people who only pretend to be good! He wrote these words that God said:*

These people speak *as if they honor me*, but they [SYN] really do not think about honoring me at all.⁷ It is useless for them to worship me, because they teach only what people have commanded *as if I myself had commanded them*.

⁸ You, *like your ancestors*, refuse to do what God has commanded. Instead, you follow only the traditions that <others/your ancestors> have *taught*."⁹ Jesus also said to them, "*You think [IRO] that you are clever in refusing to do what God commanded just so that you can obey your own traditions!*"¹⁰ *For example, our ancestor Moses wrote God's command, 'Honor your fathers and your mothers'. He also wrote, 'The authorities must execute a person who speaks evil about his father or mother.'*¹¹⁻¹² But you *teach people that it is all right that people no longer must help their parents. You teach people that it is all right if people give their things to God instead of giving them to their parents*. You allow them to say to their parents, "*What I was going to give to you to provide for you, I have now promised to give to God. So I cannot any longer help you!*" As a result, you are *actually telling people* that they no longer have to help their parents!¹³ And, by doing that, you disregard what God commanded! You teach your own traditions to others *and tell them strongly that they should obey them!* And you do many other things like that."

¹⁴ Then Jesus again summoned the crowd *to come closer*. Then he said to them *figuratively*, "All of you people listen to me! Try to understand [DOU] *what I am about to tell you*."¹⁵ Nothing that people eat causes *God to consider them to be unacceptable*. On the contrary, it is that which comes from people's <inner beings/hearts> that causes God to reject them."^a

¹⁷ After Jesus had left the crowd and then entered a house with the disciples, they questioned him about the parable *that he had just spoken*.¹⁸ He replied to them, "*<I am disappointed that you also do not understand what it means!/Why can not you understand what it means?> [RHQ]* <You ought to understand that nothing that *enters us from outside* can cause *God to consider us unacceptable to him./Can not you understand that nothing that enters us from outside of us can cause God to consider us unacceptable to him?> [RHQ]*"¹⁹ Instead of entering *and ruining* our minds/souls, it goes into our stomachs, and afterwards the refuse passes out *of our bodies*." By saying this, Jesus was declaring that people *can eat* any food without causing *God to reject them*.²⁰ He also said, "It is the *thoughts and actions* that come from within people that cause *God to consider them unacceptable to him*."²¹ Specifically, it is people's innermost being *that causes them to think things that are evil; they act immorally, they steal things, they commit murder*.²² They *commit* adultery, they are greedy, they *act*

^a Some Greek manuscripts add v. 16, "If you want to understand what I am saying, you must think carefully about it!"

maliciously, they deceive *people*. They *act* indecently, they envy *people*, they speak evil about others, they are proud, and they *act* foolishly. ²³ People think *these thoughts* and then they do these evil actions, and that is what causes *God* to consider them unacceptable to him.”

MARK 7:24-30

THEME: *Jesus went to the region around Tyre to be away from people, but they learned of it and a woman came to ask him to expel an evil spirit from her daughter.*

²⁴ After Jesus and his disciples left Galilee district, they went to the region around Tyre city. While he stayed at a certain house, he desired that no one know *it*, but people soon found out *that he was there*. ²⁵ A certain woman, whose daughter had an evil spirit *within her*, heard about Jesus. At once she came to him and prostrated herself at his feet. ²⁶ This woman was *not a Jew*. Her ancestors came from Greece country, but she was born in the region around Phoenicia town in Syria district. She pleaded with Jesus that he expel the evil spirit from her daughter. ²⁷ But he wanted to see how strongly she believed in him. So, suggesting that he should help the Jews first and not the non-Jews whom some Jews called dogs [MET], he spoke to her saying, “First let the children eat all they want, because it is not good for someone to take the food the mother has prepared for the children and then throw it to the little dogs.” ²⁸ But to show that she believed that non-Jews could also receive help from God [MET], she replied to him, “Sir, what you say is correct, but even the little dogs, which lie under the table, eat the crumbs that the children drop.” ²⁹ Jesus said to her, “Because of what you have said, you have shown me that you believe in what I can do for you. So I will help you. Now you may go home, because I have caused the evil spirit to leave your daughter.” ³⁰ The woman returned to her house and saw that her child was lying quietly on the bed and that the evil spirit had left.

MARK 7:31-37

THEME: *When Jesus went back to Lake Galilee, some people brought a deaf-mute man to Jesus and asked him to heal the man, which he did.*

³¹ Jesus and his disciples left the region around Tyre city and went north through Sidon city, then toward the east through the district of the Ten Towns, and then south to the towns near Lake Galilee. ³² There, people brought to him a man who was deaf and who could hardly talk. They begged Jesus to lay his hands on him in order to heal him. ³³ So Jesus took him away from the crowd in order that the two of them could be alone. Then he put one of his fingers into each of the man's ears. After he spat on his fingers, he touched the man's tongue with his fingers. ³⁴ Then he looked up toward heaven, he sighed because he was concerned for the man, and then in his own language he said to the man's ears, “Ephphatha”, which means, “Be opened {Open up}!” ³⁵ At once the man could hear plainly [MTY]. He also began to speak clearly because what was causing him to be unable to speak was healed {Jesus healed what was causing him to be unable to speak}. ³⁶ Jesus told <the people/his friends> not to tell anyone what he had done. But, although he ordered them and others repeatedly not to tell anyone about it, they kept talking about it very much. ³⁷ People who heard about it were utterly amazed and were saying enthusiastically, “Everything he has done is wonderful! Besides doing other amazing things, he enables deaf people to hear! And he enables those who cannot speak to speak!”

MARK 8:1-10

THEME: *Again Jesus provided food miraculously for a great crowd who gathered to hear him and became hungry.*

8 ¹ During those days, a large crowd of people gathered again. After they had been there a couple days, they had no food to eat. So Jesus summoned the disciples to come closer and then he said to them, ² “This is the third day that these people have been with me, and they have nothing left to eat, so now I feel very sorry for them. ³ Furthermore, if I send them home while they are still hungry, some of them will faint on the way home, because some of them have come from far away.” ⁴ Knowing that he was suggesting that they give the people something to eat, one of his disciples replied, “<We cannot possibly find food to satisfy this crowd, here in this place where no people live!>” [RHQ] ⁵ Jesus asked them, “How many loaves of bread do you have?” They replied, “We have seven flat loaves.” ⁶ Jesus commanded the crowd, “Sit down on the ground!” After they sat down, he took the seven loaves, he thanked God for them, he broke them into pieces and started giving them to his disciples in order that they might distribute them to the people. ⁷ They found that they also had a few small dried fish. So after he thanked God for these, he told the disciples, “Distribute these also.” After they distributed the bread and fish to the crowd, ⁸ the people ate this food and they had plenty to satisfy them. The disciples collected the pieces of food that were left over. They filled seven large baskets full of those pieces. ⁹ They estimated that there were about four thousand people who ate on that day. ¹⁰ Jesus dismissed the crowd. Immediately after that, he got into the boat along with his disciples, and they went around Lake Galilee to Dalmanutha district.

MARK 8:11-21

THEME: *Jesus rebuked those who insisted on him performing more miracles, and rebuked the disciples when they worried about not having enough food with them.*

¹¹ *In those days some Pharisees came to Jesus. They asked him to perform a miracle that would show that God had sent him. They wanted to find a way by which they could convince the people to reject him. So they started to argue with him.*

¹² *Jesus sighed deeply within himself, and then he said, "I am disgusted that [RHQ], even though you people have seen how I have healed people, you keep asking me to perform miracles! Note this: Such a miracle will certainly not be shown {I will certainly not show such a miracle} just for you people!"* ¹³ *Then he left them.*

He got into the boat again, along with his disciples, and they went further around Lake Galilee. ¹⁴ *The disciples had forgotten to bring along enough food. Specifically, they had only one flat loaf of bread with them in the boat.* ¹⁵ *As they were going, Jesus warned them against the attitudes the Pharisees and Herod Antipas had, attitudes that were having a bad effect on other people. He did this by telling them a parable. He said, "Be careful! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod!"* ¹⁶ *The disciples misunderstood him. So they said to one another, "He must have said that because we have no bread."* ¹⁷ *Jesus knew what they were discussing among themselves. So he said to them, "◀I am disappointed that you are discussing about your not having enough bread! Why are you discussing about your not having enough bread?▶ [RHQ] ◀You should understand by now that I can provide miraculously for you if you need food! Why do you not yet perceive or understand that I can provide miraculously for you if you need food?▶ [RHQ] ◀You are not thinking! Why are you not thinking?▶ [RHQ] ◀I am also disappointed that, although you have eyes, you do not understand what you see! Why is it that, although you have eyes, you do not understand what you see?▶ [RHQ] You have ears, but you do not understand what I say [RHQ]!"* *Then he asked, "Do you not remember what happened* ¹⁹ *when I broke only five loaves and fed the five thousand people [RHQ]? Not only was everyone satisfied, but there was food left over! How many baskets full of pieces of bread that were left over did you collect?"* They replied, "We collected twelve baskets full." ²⁰ *Then he asked, "When I broke the seven loaves in order to feed the four thousand people, again when everyone had plenty to eat, how many large baskets of pieces of bread that were left over did you collect?"* They replied, "We collected seven large baskets full." ²¹ *Then he kept saying to them, "◀I am disappointed that you do not understand yet that you should never worry that you do not have enough food! Why do you not understand yet that you should never worry that you do not have enough food?▶" [RHQ]*

MARK 8:22-26

THEME: *Jesus healed a blind man.*

²² *They arrived in the boat at Bethsaida town. People brought to Jesus a blind man and earnestly requested that Jesus touch him in order to heal him.* ²³ *Jesus took the hand of the blind man, led him outside the town, he put his saliva on the man's eyes, he put his hands on the man, and then he asked him, "Do you see anything?"* ²⁴ *The man looked up and then he said, "Yes, I see people! They are walking around, but I cannot see them clearly. They look like trees!"* ²⁵ *Then Jesus again touched the eyes of the blind man. The man looked intently and at that moment he was completely healed! He could see everything clearly.* ²⁶ *Jesus said to him, "Do not go into the town! First go straight home and tell the people there about what I did!"* Then he sent the man to his home.

MARK 8:27-30

THEME: *On the way to the villages near the city of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples what people were saying about who he was and, then, what they thought.*

²⁷ *Jesus and the disciples left Bethsaida town and went to the villages near Caesarea Philippi town. On the way he questioned them, "Who do people say that I really am?"* ²⁸ *They replied, "Some people say that you are John the Baptizer, who has come back to life again. Others say that you are the prophet Elijah who has returned from heaven as God promised. And others say that you are one of the other former prophets who has come back to life again."* ²⁹ *He asked them, "What about you? Who do you say that I am?"* Peter replied to him, "We believe that you are the Messiah!" ³⁰ *Then Jesus warned them strongly that they should not tell anyone yet that he was the Messiah.*

MARK 8:31-33

THEME: *Jesus spoke plainly to his disciples about his coming death and resurrection.*

³¹ *Then Jesus began to teach them, "Even though I am the one who came from heaven, it is necessary that I suffer very much. It is also necessary that I be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the men who teach the Jewish laws {that the elders, the chief priests, and the men who teach the Jewish laws reject me}, and that I be killed {they kill me}. But on the third day after I am killed I will become alive again."* ³² *He said this to them clearly. But Peter took Jesus aside and then, because he assumed that the Messiah would never die, he started to rebuke Jesus for talking about dying.* ³³ *Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples. Then he rebuked Peter, saying, "Stop thinking like that! Satan is causing you to talk like that! Instead of wanting what God wants me to do, you are wanting me to do only what most people would want me to do."*

MARK 8:34-9:1

THEME: *Jesus explained to the crowd and his disciples what is required if anyone wants to be Jesus' disciple.*

³⁴ Then he summoned the crowd along with his disciples so that they might listen to him. He told them, "If any one of you wants to be my disciple, you must not do *only* what you yourself want to do. Specifically, you must be *willing to allow people to hurt you and to disgrace you. That is what they do to criminals* who are forced to carry crosses [MET] to the places where they will be crucified. That is what anyone who wants to be my disciple must do. ³⁵ *You must do that*, because those who try to save their lives *by denying that they belong to me when people want to kill them for believing in me* will not live *eternally*, but those who are killed because of being my disciples and *because of telling others my good message* will live *forever with me*. ³⁶ People might get everything they want in this world, but <they are really gaining nothing if they do not get eternal life because they do not become my disciples!> what will they gain if they do not get eternal life *because they do not become my disciples?*> [RHQ] ³⁷ <Think carefully about the fact that there is absolutely nothing that people can give to God that would enable them to gain eternal life!> Is there anything that a person can give to God in order to gain eternal life?> [RHQ] ³⁸ And think about this: Those who refuse to say that they belong to me and who reject what I say in these days when many people have turned away from God and are very sinful, I, the one who came from heaven, will also refuse to say that they belong to me when I come back with the holy angels and have the glorious brightness that my Father has!"

9 ¹ He also said to his disciples, "Listen carefully! Some of you who are here now will see God ruling powerfully in many ways. You will see it before you die!"

MARK 9:2-8

THEME: *Jesus took Peter, James and John up a high mountain where his appearance changed and Moses and Elijah appeared and talked to Jesus.*

² A week later Jesus took Peter, James and James' younger brother John and led them up a high mountain. While they were alone up there, he appeared very different to them. ³ His clothes became dazzling white. They were whiter than anyone on earth could make them by bleaching them. ⁴ Two prophets who had lived long ago, Moses and Elijah, appeared to them. Then the two of them began talking with Jesus. ⁵ After a short time, Peter interrupted by exclaiming, "Teacher, it is wonderful to be here! So allow us to make three shelters. One will be for you, one will be for Moses, and one will be for Elijah!" ⁶ He said this because he wanted to say something, but he did not know what to say, because he and the other two disciples were very awestruck. ⁷ Then a shining cloud appeared that covered them. God [EUP] spoke to them from the cloud saying, "This is my Son. He is the one whom I love. Therefore, listen to him!" ⁸ When the three disciples looked around, they saw that suddenly Jesus was alone with them, and that there was no longer anyone else there.

Mark 9:9-13

THEME: *Jesus told them that the one like Elijah has already come and been evilly treated, but that the Messiah would also be evilly treated.*

⁹ While they were coming down the mountain, Jesus told them that they should not tell anyone yet what had just happened to him. He said, "You may tell them after I, the one who came from heaven, <rise from the dead/become alive again> after I die." ¹⁰ So they did not tell others about it for a long time. But they discussed among themselves what it meant when he said that he would <rise from the dead/become alive again> after he died.

¹¹ The three disciples had just seen Elijah, but Elijah had not done anything to prepare people to accept Jesus. So they asked Jesus, "The men who teach the Jewish laws say that Elijah must come back to the earth before the Messiah comes to earth. But you have been here a long time and Elijah came just today. So is what they are teaching wrong?" ¹²⁻¹³ Jesus wanted them to know that John the Baptizer was the one who represented Elijah. So he answered them, "It is true that God promised to send Elijah to come first so that people would be ready when I came. Elijah's representative has already come, and our leaders treated him very badly, just like they wanted to do, just like it was prophesied {the prophets prophesied} long ago. But, <I also want you to consider what is written {what the prophets wrote} in the Scriptures about me, the one who came from heaven./why have you not thought about what is written {what the prophets wrote} about me, the one who came from heaven?> [RHQ] It is written {They wrote} that I would suffer much and that I would be rejected {that many people would reject me}."

MARK 9:14-29

THEME: *Jesus expelled an evil spirit and later explained to the disciples why they had failed to do that.*

¹⁴ Jesus and those three disciples returned to where the other disciples were. They saw a large crowd around the other disciples and some men who taught the Jewish laws arguing with them. ¹⁵ As soon as the crowd saw Jesus, they were very surprised to see him come. So they ran to him and greeted him. ¹⁶ He asked them, "What are you arguing about?" ¹⁷ A man in the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son here in order that you would heal him. There is an evil spirit in him that makes him unable to talk. ¹⁸ Whenever the spirit attacks him, it throws him down. He foams at the mouth, he grinds his teeth together, and he becomes stiff. I asked your disciples to expel the spirit, but they were not able to do it." ¹⁹ Jesus

replied by saying to those people, “<I am very disappointed that *although you* have observed how I help people, you do not believe *that you are able to do anything!*/Why is it that *although you* have observed how I help people, you do not believe *that you are able to do anything?*> [RHQ] <I have been with you a long time, *and you still cannot do what I do!*/How long do I have to be with you *before you can do what I do?*> [RHQ] Bring the boy to me!”²⁰ So they brought the boy to Jesus. As soon as the evil spirit saw Jesus, it shook the boy severely, and *the boy* fell on the ground. He rolled around, and he foamed at the mouth.²¹ Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” He replied, “*This started to happen* when he was a child.²² *The spirit does not only do this*, but he also often throws him into the fire or into the water in order to kill him. But, pity us and help us, if you can!”²³ Jesus exclaimed to him, “*Do not say* [RHQ] ‘If you can’, for *God/I* can do anything for people who believe *in him/me!*”²⁴ Immediately the child’s father shouted, “I believe *that you can help me*, but I do not believe strongly. Help me to believe more strongly!”²⁵ Because *Jesus wanted to heal the boy* before the crowd got bigger, he rebuked the evil spirit, saying, “You evil spirit, you who are *causing this boy to be deaf* and unable to talk! I command you to come out of him and never enter him again!”²⁶ The evil spirit shouted, it shook the boy violently, and then it left the boy. The boy did not move. He seemed like a dead body. So many of the people there said, “He is dead!”²⁷ However, Jesus took him by the hand and helped him get up. Then the boy stood up. *He was healed!*²⁸ Later, when Jesus and his disciples were alone in a house, one of them asked him, “Why were we not able to expel *the evil spirit?*”²⁹ He said to them, “You can expel this kind of *evil spirit* only by your praying *that God will give you the power to do it*. There is no other way that you can expel them.”

MARK 9:30-32

THEME: *Jesus was teaching his disciples that he would be handed over to other men, killed, and become alive again; but they did not understand what he was saying.*

³⁰ After *Jesus and his disciples* left that district, they traveled through Galilee district. Jesus did not want anyone else to know *that he was in their area*³¹ lest they interrupt him as he taught his disciples. He was telling them, “*Some day my enemies* [SYN] will seize [MTY] me, the one who came from heaven, and I will be put {they will put me} into the hands of other men. Those men will kill me. But on the third day after I am killed {after they kill me}, I will become alive again!”³² But they did not understand what he was telling them. Also, they were afraid to ask him about what he had said.

MARK 9:33-37

THEME: *Jesus taught his disciples by illustration about what kind of person God considers important.*

³³ Jesus and his disciples returned to Capernaum town. When they were in the house, he asked them, “What were you discussing *while we were traveling* on the road?”³⁴ But they did not reply. *They were ashamed to reply* because, *while they were traveling*, they had been arguing with each other about which one of them *would be* the most important *when Jesus became king*.³⁵ He sat down, he summoned the twelve disciples *to come close to him*, and then he said to them, “If anyone wants *God to consider him* to be the most important person of all, he must *consider himself* to be the least important person of all, and he must serve everyone else.”³⁶ Then he took a child and placed him among them. He took the child in his arms and then he said to them,³⁷ “Those who, *because they love me*, welcome a child like this one, *God considers that they are welcoming me*. So *it is as though* they are also welcoming *God*, who sent me.”

MARK 9:38-41

THEME: *Jesus taught his disciples about who is for him and who is against him.*

³⁸ John said to Jesus, “Teacher, we saw someone who was expelling demons, <*claiming he had authority from you to do that/while telling people that you have told him to do it*>. So we told him to stop doing it because he was not one of us disciples.”³⁹ Jesus said, “Do not tell him *not to do that*. For no one will speak evilly about me just after he performs a miracle while saying that *I have told him to do it*.”⁴⁰ Furthermore, those who are not opposing us are trying to *achieve the same goals that we are*.⁴¹ Also think about this: Those *who belong to me who help you in any way, even if they just give you a cup of water to drink because you follow me*, the Messiah, will certainly be rewarded by God!

MARK 9:42-48

THEME: *Jesus taught his disciples about sin and its result.*

⁴² *Jesus also said*, “But if you cause someone who believes in me to sin, *God will severely punish you*, even if that person is *socially unimportant like* this little child. If someone tied a heavy stone around your neck and you were thrown {and threw you} into the sea, *you would consider that was a severe punishment. But God will punish you more severely than that if you cause a person who believes in me to sin*.”⁴³ So, if you are *wanting to use one of* [MTY, PRS] *your hands to sin, stop using your hand! Even if you have to cut your hand off and throw it away to avoid sinning, do it* [HYP]! It is good that you not sin and that you live eternally, *even though you lack one of your hands while you are here on earth*. But it is not good that you sin and as a result God throws your whole body into hell. There the fires never go out!^{b 45} If you are *wanting to use one of* [PRS] *your feet to sin, stop using your foot! Even if you have to cut off your foot to avoid sinning, do it* [HYP]! It is

^b Some Greek manuscripts add here for v. 44, “In that place people suffer forever, and the fires are never put out.”

good that you not sin and live eternally, *even though* you lack one of your feet *while you are here on earth*. But it is not good that you sin and go to hell.^c ⁴⁷ If because of what you see [MTY, PRS] you are tempted to sin, *stop looking at those things!* Even if you have to gouge out your eye and throw it away [HYP] *to avoid sinning, do it! It is good that you not sin and live eternally, even though you lack one of your eyes while you are here on earth*. But it is not good that you sin and, as a result, God puts your whole body in hell. ⁴⁸ In that place people suffer forever and the fires are never put out {never go out}.”

Mark 9:49-50

THEME: *Jesus taught that we must endure trials to remain useful to God.*

⁴⁹ “You must endure difficulties in order that God will be pleased with you. Your difficulties are like a fire that makes things pure [MET]. Your enduring is also like [MET] salt being put on {people putting salt on their} sacrifices to make them pure. ⁵⁰ Salt is useful to put on food, but you cannot [RHQ] make salt to taste salty again if it becomes flavorless [MET]. Similarly, you must remain useful to God, *because no one can make you useful to God again if you become useless*. You must also live peacefully with each other.”

MARK 10:1-12

THEME: *Some Pharisees asked him if the law permitted a man to divorce his wife. Jesus answered and supported his answer from Scripture.*

10 ¹ Jesus left <that place/Capernaum> with his disciples, and they went through Judea district and on across to the east side of the Jordan River. When crowds gathered around him again, he taught them again, as he customarily did. ² While he was teaching them, some Pharisees approached him and asked him, “Does our Jewish law permit a man to divorce his wife?” They asked that in order to be able to criticize him *whether he answered “yes” or “no”*. ³ He answered them, “What did Moses command your ancestors about a man divorcing his wife?” ⁴ One of them replied, “Moses permitted that a man may write on paper his reason for divorcing his wife, give this paper to her, and then send her away.” ⁵ Jesus said to them, “It was because your ancestors stubbornly wanted just what they desired that Moses wrote that law for your ancestors, and you are just like them! ⁶ Remember that he also wrote that, when God first created people, he made one man, and one woman to become that man’s wife. ⁷ That explains why God said, ‘When a man and woman marry, they should no longer live with their fathers and mothers after they marry.’ ⁸ Instead, the two of them shall live together, and they shall become so closely united [MET] that they are like one person. Therefore, although the people who marry were two separate persons before, God regards them as one person now, so he wants them to remain married. ⁹ Because that is true, a man must not separate from his wife whom God has joined to him, because God’s plan is for them to remain together!”

¹⁰ When Jesus and his disciples were alone in a house, they asked him again about this. ¹¹ He said to them, “God considers that a marriage lasts until either the husband or the wife dies, so he considers that any man who divorces his wife and marries another woman is committing adultery, *even if he divorces his first wife*. ¹² God also considers a woman who divorces her first husband to be committing adultery if she marries another man.”

MARK 10:13-16

THEME: *Jesus became indignant when he saw his disciples scolding people for bringing children for him to bless them.*

¹³ One day, some people were bringing children to Jesus in order that he would touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded those people *because they thought that Jesus <did not want to be bothered spending time with/was not concerned about> children*. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw that, he became angry. He said to the disciples, “Allow the children to come to me! Do not forbid them! [DOU] It is people who are humble and trust as they do who can experience <God’s rule in their lives/God taking care of them> [MET]. ¹⁵ Note this: Those who do not trustingly allow God to direct their lives, as children do, will not enter the place where God rules.” ¹⁶ Then he embraced the children. He also put his hands on them and asked God to bless them.

MARK 10:17-31

THEME: *After a man asked Jesus what he should do in order to live eternally, Jesus told him to sell all his possessions, which astonished the disciples.*

¹⁷ As Jesus was starting to travel again with his disciples, a young man ran up to him. He knelt before Jesus and then he asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to have eternal life/in order to live with God eternally?” ¹⁸ Jesus said to him, “<You should consider carefully what you are implying (OR, that you are implying that I am God) by calling me good, because only God is good!//Do you realize what you are implying (OR, that you are implying that I am God) by calling me good, because only God is good?> [RHQ] No other person is good ¹⁹ But to answer your question, you know the

^c Some Greek manuscripts add here for v.46 as they did in v.44, “In that place people suffer forever, and the fires are never put out.”

commandments of Moses, which will cause you to live eternally if you obey them perfectly. He commanded things such as 'do not murder anyone, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not <testify falsely/lie>, do not cheat anyone, and honor your father and mother.'" ²⁰ The man said to him, "Teacher, I have obeyed all those commandments ever since I was young. So is <that enough/there something else that I have not done>?" ²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. He said to him, "There is one thing that you have not yet done. You must go home, sell all that you possess, and then give the money to poor people. As a result, you will be spiritually rich in heaven. After you have done what I have told you, come with me and be my disciple!" ²² The man became disappointed when he heard that. He went away sad, because he was very rich and he did not want to give away everything. ²³ Jesus looked around at the people. Then he exclaimed to his disciples, "It is very difficult for people who are wealthy to decide to let God rule their lives!" ²⁴ The disciples were surprised at what he said. They thought that God favored the rich people, so if God did not save them, he would not save anyone. So Jesus replied again to them, "My dear friends, it is very difficult for anyone to decide to let God rule his life. ²⁵ It is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. It is almost as difficult [HYP] for rich people to decide to let God rule their lives." ²⁶ The disciples were very astonished. So they said to each other, "If that is so, <it will be unlikely that anyone will be saved {that God will save anyone!}/will God save anyone?> [RHQ]" ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and then he said, "Yes, it is impossible for people to save themselves! But God certainly can save them, because God can do anything!" ²⁸ Peter exclaimed, "You know that we have left behind everything and we have become your disciples. So, <what about us/will God accept us/reward us?>" ²⁹ Jesus replied, "I want you to know this: Those who have left their houses, their brothers, their sisters, their father, their mother, their children, or their plots of ground, to be my disciples and to proclaim the good news, ³⁰ will receive in this life a hundred times as much as they left behind. That will include houses and people as dear as brothers and sisters and mothers and children, and plots of ground. Furthermore, although people will persecute them here on earth because they believe in me, in the future age they will <have eternal life/live with God eternally>. ³¹ But I warn you all: Many of you who now consider yourselves to be very important will be unimportant at that future time, and many of you who now consider yourselves to be unimportant will be very important at that future time!"

MARK 10:32-34

THEME: As they were traveling toward Jerusalem, Jesus took the disciples aside and began to tell them again about what was going to happen to him.

³² Some days later as they continued to travel, Jesus and his disciples were walking on the road that leads up to Jerusalem city. Jesus was walking ahead of them. The disciples/apostles were astonished that he was going to where there were many people who opposed him, and the other people who were with them were afraid about what would happen to him in Jerusalem. Along the way he took the twelve disciples to a place by themselves. Then he began to tell them again about what was going to happen to him, saying, ³³ "Listen carefully! We are going up to Jerusalem. There the chief priests and the men who teach the Jewish laws will be enabled {someone will help the chief priests and those who teach our Jewish laws} to seize me. Then they will declare that I must die, even though I am the one who came from heaven. Then they will take me to the Roman authorities. ³⁴ Those men will ridicule me. They will spit on me. They will whip me. Then they will kill me. But on the third day after that, I will become alive again!"

MARK 10:35-45

THEME: After James and John requested to sit on the right and left of Jesus when he rules, Jesus told them what will happen and how they should act.

³⁵ Along the way James and John, who were the two sons of Zebedee, approached Jesus and they said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us what we will ask you to do!" ³⁶ He said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³⁷ They said to him, "When you rule gloriously, let us rule with you. Let one of us sit at your right side and one sit at your left side." ³⁸ But Jesus said to them, "You do not understand what you are asking for." Then he asked them, "Can you endure suffering [MTY] like I am about to suffer? Can you endure being killed [MTY] as I will be killed {people killing you as they will kill me}?" ³⁹ They said to him, "Yes, we are able to do that!" Then Jesus said to them, "It is true that you will endure suffering [MTY] like I will suffer, and you will endure being killed as I will be killed {people killing you as they will kill me}. ⁴⁰ But I am not the one who chooses the ones who will sit next to me and rule with me. God will give those places to the ones he appoints."

⁴¹ The other ten disciples later heard about what James and John had requested. As a result, they were angry with them because they also wanted to rule with Jesus in the highest positions. ⁴² Then, after Jesus called them all together, he said to them, "You know that those who rule the non-Jews enjoy showing that they are powerful. You also know that officials enjoy commanding others. ⁴³ But do not be like them! On the contrary, all those among you who want God to consider them great must become like servants to the rest of you. ⁴⁴ Furthermore, if anyone among you wants God to consider him to be the most important, he must act like a servant for the rest of you. ⁴⁵ You should imitate me. Even though I am the one who has come from heaven, I did not come to be served {for others to serve me}. On the contrary, I came in order to serve others and to allow others to kill me, in order that my dying for people would be like a payment to rescue many people from being punished {God punishing them} for their sins."

MARK 10:46-52

THEME: After a blind man called out and asked Jesus to have mercy on him, Jesus healed him.

⁴⁶ On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus and the disciples came to Jericho town. Afterwards, while they were leaving Jericho along with a great crowd, a blind man who habitually begged for money was sitting beside the road. His name was Bartimaeus and his father's name was Timaeus. ⁴⁷ When he heard people say that Jesus from Nazareth was passing by, he shouted, "Jesus! *You who are the Messiah* descended from King David, <be merciful to/help> me!" ⁴⁸ Many people rebuked him and told him that he should be quiet. But he shouted even more, "*You who are the Messiah* descended from King David, <be merciful to/help> me!" ⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, "Call him to come over here!" They summoned the blind man, saying, "Jesus is calling you! So cheer up and get up and come!" ⁵⁰ He threw aside his cloak as he jumped up, and he came to Jesus. ⁵¹ Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "Sir, I want to be able to see again!" ⁵² Jesus said to him, "I am healing you because you believed in me. So you may go home!" He could see immediately. And he went with Jesus along the road.

MARK 11:1-11

THEME: They brought a young donkey to Jesus; then Jesus mounted it and rode to Jerusalem with people shouting praise of him as they went along.

11 ¹ When they came near to Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage and Bethany villages near Olive Tree Hill. Then Jesus selected two of his disciples. ² He said to them, "Go to that village just ahead of you. As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey that no one has ever ridden, that has been tied {people have tied} up. Untie it, and then bring it to me. ³ If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing that?', say, 'Jesus, our Lord, needs to use it. He will send it back here with someone as soon as he no longer needs it.'" ⁴ So the two disciples went and they found a young donkey. It was tied close to the door of a house, which was beside the street. Then they untied it. ⁵ Some of the people who were there said to them, "Why are you untying the donkey?" ⁶ They told them what Jesus had said. So the people permitted them to take the donkey. ⁷ They brought the donkey to Jesus. The disciples put their cloaks on it in order to make something for him to sit on. ⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road to honor him as a king. Others, in order to honor him, spread along the road branches that they cut from palm trees in the fields beside the road. ⁹ The people who were going in front of him and behind him were all shouting things like, "Praise God!" "May God bless this one who comes <with his authority/as his representative> [MTY]." ¹⁰ "May you be blessed {May God bless you} when you rule like our ancestor King David ruled!" "Praise God who is in the highest heaven!"

¹¹ He entered Jerusalem with them, and then he went into the Temple courtyard. After he looked around at everything there, he left the city because it was already late in the afternoon. He returned to Bethany town with the twelve disciples and slept there.

MARK 11:12-14

THEME: Jesus cursed a fig tree as a sign of what would happen to the people of Israel.

¹² The next day, as Jesus and his disciples were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. ¹³ He saw from a distance a fig tree with all its leaves, so he went to it to see if he could find any figs on it. But when he came to it, he found only leaves on it. This was because it was not yet time when normal fig trees have ripe figs. ¹⁴ But to illustrate how God would punish the nation of Israel, he said to the tree, "No one shall ever eat from you again because you will no longer bear figs." The disciples heard what he said.

MARK 11:15-19

THEME: Jesus expelled those who were buying and selling goods in the Temple and taught that the Temple was to be a place of prayer. These actions angered the priests and scribes who, then, looked for a way to kill Jesus.

¹⁵ Jesus and his disciples went back to Jerusalem. He entered the Temple courtyard. He saw people who were selling and buying animals for sacrifices. They were spoiling the place of worship. He chased those people from the Temple courtyard. He also overturned the tables of those who were giving Temple tax money in exchange for Roman coins. He overturned the seats of the men who were selling doves for sacrifice, ¹⁶ and he would not allow anyone who was carrying anything to sell to go through the Temple area. ¹⁷ Then as he taught those people, he said to them, "It is written {One of the prophets wrote} in the Scriptures that God said, 'I want my house to be called {people to call my house} a house where people from all nations may pray', but you bandits have made it like a cave where you can hide! <You know that!/Do you not know that?> [RHQ]" ¹⁸ The chief priests and the men who taught the Jewish laws later heard about what he had done. So they planned how they might kill him, but they knew that it would be difficult, because they realized that the crowd was amazed at what he was teaching and they feared that the people would soon decide that Jesus had more authority over the Temple than they did (OR, feared what the people would do if they tried to arrest Jesus). ¹⁹ That evening, Jesus and his disciples left the city and again slept in Bethany.

MARK 11:20-25

THEME: *When Jesus and his disciples passed the fig tree that Jesus had cursed, they saw that it had withered. Jesus used this as an illustration for trusting that God would answer prayer.*

²⁰ The next morning while they were going along the road toward Jerusalem, they saw that the fig tree that Jesus had cursed had withered completely. ²¹ Peter remembered what Jesus had said to the fig tree and he exclaimed to Jesus, "Teacher, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered!" ²² Jesus replied, "You should not be surprised that God did what I asked! You must trust that God will do whatever you ask him to do!" ²³ Also note this: If anyone says to this hill, 'Be raised up {Rise up} and then be thrown {throw yourself} into the lake!' and if he does not doubt that what he asks for will happen, that is, if he believes that what he asks for will happen, God will do it for him. ²⁴ So I tell you, whenever you ask God for something when you pray, believe that you will receive it, and, if you do, God will do it for you. ²⁵ Now, I tell you this also: Whenever you are praying, if you have a grudge against people because they have harmed you, forgive them, in order that your Father in heaven will likewise forgive your sins."^d

MARK 11:27-33

THEME: *The chief priests, scribes and elders asked Jesus by what authority he was doing these things. He, then, asked them a question that they would not answer; so he did not answer theirs.*

²⁷ Jesus and his disciples arrived in the Temple courtyard in Jerusalem again. While Jesus was walking there, a group consisting of chief priests, some men who taught the Jewish laws, and elders came to him and they said to him, ²⁸ "By what authority are you doing these things? Who authorized you to do things like those you did here yesterday?" ²⁹ Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you who authorized me to do those things. ³⁰ Did God [MTY] or people authorize John to baptize those who came to him?" ³¹ They debated among themselves as to what they should answer. They said to each other, "If we say that it was God who authorized him, he will say to us, 'Therefore, you should have believed what John said! why did you not believe what John said?'" [RHQ] ³² On the other hand, if we say that it was people who authorized John, then what will happen to us?" They were afraid to say that about where John got his authority, because they knew that the people would be very angry with them. They knew that all the people truly believed that John was a prophet whom God had sent. ³³ So they answered Jesus, "We do not know where John got his authority." Then Jesus said to them, "Because you did not answer my question, I will not tell you who authorized me to do those things here yesterday."

MARK 12:1-12

THEME: *After Jesus told the Jewish leaders a parable, they realized that he was accusing them of wanting to kill him, but they feared how the people would react if they arrested Jesus.*

12 ¹ Then Jesus told those Jewish leaders a parable. He wanted to show what God would do to those who rejected the former prophets and himself. He said, "A certain man planted a vineyard. He built a fence around it in order to protect it. He made a stone tank to collect the juice that they would press out of the grapes. He also built a tower for someone to sit in to guard his vineyard. Then he leased the vineyard to some men to care for it and to give him some of the grapes in return. Then he went away to another country. ² When the time came to harvest the grapes, he sent a servant to the men who were taking care of the vineyard in order to receive from them his share of the grapes that the vineyard had produced. ³ But after the servant arrived, they grabbed him and beat him, and they did not give him any fruit. Then they sent him away. ⁴ Later the one who owned the vineyard sent another servant to them. But they bashed the head of that one, and they insulted him. ⁵ Later he sent another servant. That man they killed. They mistreated many other servants whom he sent. Some they beat and some they killed. ⁶ The man still had one other person with him. He had with him his son whom he loved very much. So, finally he sent his son to them because he thought that they would respect him and give him some of the grapes. ⁷ But when they saw his son coming, those men who were looking after the vineyard said to each other, 'Look! Here comes the man who will some day inherit the vineyard! So let's kill him in order that this vineyard will be ours!' ⁸ They seized him and killed him. Then they threw his body outside the vineyard. ⁹ So <do you know what the man who owns the vineyard will do?/I will tell you what the man who owns the vineyard will do [RHQ]>. He will come, and he will kill those evil men who were taking care of his vineyard. Then he will arrange for other people to take care of it. ¹⁰ Now think carefully about these words, which you have read in the Scriptures:

The men who were building the building rejected one stone. But others put that same stone in its proper place, and it has become the most important stone in the building [MET]! ¹¹ The Lord has done this, and we marvel as we look at it."

¹² Then the Jewish leaders realized that he was accusing them when he told this story about what those wicked people did. So they wanted to seize him. But they were afraid of what the crowds would do if they did that. So they left him and went away.

^d Some Greek manuscripts add v. 26, "But if you do not forgive others, your Father who is in heaven will similarly not forgive your sins."

MARK 12:13-17

THEME: *Jesus foiled the Jewish leaders' attempt to trap him by their question of whether they should pay taxes to the Roman government.*

¹³The Jewish leaders sent to Jesus some Pharisees who thought that the Jews should pay only the tax that their own Jewish authorities required people to pay. They also sent some members of the party that supported Herod Antipas and the Roman government. They wanted to make Jesus say something wrong that would make one of those groups very angry with him. ¹⁴After they arrived, they said to him *deceivingly*, "Teacher, we know that you teach the truth. We also know that you are not concerned about what people say about you, even if an important person does not like what you say. Instead, you teach truthfully what God wants us to do. So tell us what you think about this matter: Is it right that we pay taxes to the Roman government, or not [MTY]? Should we pay the taxes, or should we not pay them?" ¹⁵Jesus knew that they did not really want to know what God wanted them to do. So he said to them, "I know that you are just trying to make me say something wrong for which you can arrest me. Why are you just trying to make me say something wrong for which you can arrest me?" [RHQ] *But I will answer your question anyway.* Bring me a coin so that I might ask you something after I look at it." ¹⁶After they brought him a coin, he asked them, "Whose picture is on this coin? And whose name is on it?" They replied, "It is a picture and the name of Caesar, the man who rules the Roman government." ¹⁷Then Jesus said to them, "That is correct, so give to the government [MTY] what they require, and give to God what he requires." They were frustrated at his answer but amazed at what he said, because they were not able to accuse him because of what he said.

MARK 12:18-27

THEME: *Jesus showed from Scripture that the Sadducees were wrong in ridiculing the idea of life after death.*

¹⁸Men who belong to the Sadducee sect deny that people become alive again after they die. In order to discredit Jesus by ridiculing the idea that people will live again, some of them came to him and asked him, ¹⁹"Teacher, Moses wrote for us Jews that if a man who has no children dies, his brother should marry the dead man's widow. Then if those two bear children, everyone will consider that those children are the children of the man who died, and in that way the dead man will continue to have descendants. ²⁰So here is an example. There were seven boys in one family. The oldest one married a woman, but he and his wife did not bear any children. Then he later died. ²¹The second brother followed this law and married that woman and he, too, did not bear any children. Then he later died. The third brother did like his other brothers did. But he also did not bear any children, and later died. ²²Eventually all seven brothers married that woman one by one, but they had no children and one by one they died. Afterwards the woman died, too. ²³Therefore, if it were true what some people say, that people will become alive again after they die, whose wife do you think that woman will be when people become alive again? <Keep in mind that she was married to all seven brothers!> She was married to all seven brothers, so how can anyone decide [RHQ]?" ²⁴Jesus replied to them, "You are certainly wrong [RHQ]. You do not know what they have written in the Scriptures about this. You also do not understand God's power to make people alive again. ²⁵That woman will not be the wife of any of them because when people have become alive again, instead of men having wives and women having husbands, they will be like the angels in heaven, who do not marry. ²⁶But as to people becoming alive again after they die, in the book that Moses wrote, he said something about people who have died that I am sure that you have read [RHQ]. When Moses was looking at the bush that was burning, God said to him, 'I am the God whom Abraham worships and the God whom Isaac worships and the God whom Jacob worships.' ²⁷It is not dead people who worship God. It is living people who worship him. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob died long before Moses lived, but God said that they were still worshipping him, so we know their spirits were still alive! So your claim that dead people do not become alive again is very wrong."

MARK 12:28-34

THEME: *Jesus commended a scribe who accepted Jesus' assessment of the two greatest commandments, after which they asked Jesus no more questions to trap him.*

²⁸A man who taught the Jewish laws heard their discussion. He knew that Jesus answered the question well. So he stepped forward and asked Jesus, "Which commandment is the most important?" ²⁹Jesus answered, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, you people of Israel! You must worship the Lord, our God, our only Lord. ³⁰You must show that you love him in all the ways that you live! Show it in all that you want and feel, in all that you think, and in all that you do!' ³¹The next most important commandment is: 'You must love people you come in contact with as much as you love yourself.' No other commandment is more important than these two!" ³²The man said to Jesus, "Teacher, you have answered well. You correctly said that he is the only God and that there is no other God we must worship/obey. ³³You have also said correctly that we <should/must show that we> love God by all that we are, by all that we think, and by the way that we live. And you have said correctly that we must love <people with whom we come in contact/others> as much as we love ourselves. And you have also correctly said that doing these things pleases God more than offering/giving animals to him or burning other sacrifices." ³⁴Jesus realized that this man had answered wisely. So he said to him, "I perceive that you will soon decide to let God rule your life." After that, the Jewish leaders were afraid to ask him any more questions like that to try to trap him.

MARK 12:35-37

THEME: *Jesus showed from Scripture that the Messiah must be David's Lord as well as his descendant.*

³⁵ Later, while he was teaching in the Temple courtyard, Jesus said to the people, "These men who teach the Jewish laws, <they must be wrong when they say that the Messiah is *merely* a descendant of King David!/why do they say that the Messiah is *merely* a descendant of King David?> [RHQ] ³⁶ The Holy Spirit caused David himself to say *about the Messiah*, God said to my Lord, 'Sit here beside me at the place where I will highly honor you! Sit here while I completely defeat your enemies! [MTY]'

³⁷ Therefore, *because* David himself calls *the Messiah* 'my Lord,' <the Messiah cannot be *just* a man who descended from King David!/how can the Messiah be *just* a man who descended from King David?> [RHQ] *He must be much greater than David!*" Many people listened to him gladly *as he taught those things*.

MARK 12:38-40

THEME: *Jesus warned them about the scribes' hypocritical actions.*

³⁸ While Jesus was teaching *the people*, he said to them, "Beware that you *do not act like* the men who teach our Jewish laws. They *like people to honor them*, so they put on long robes and walk around *in order to show people how important they are*. They also like people to greet them *respectfully* in the market places. ³⁹ *They like to sit* in the most important seats in our <synagogue/Jewish meeting place>. At festivals, *they like to sit in* the seats where the most honored people sit. ⁴⁰ They <swindle/take for themselves> the houses *and property* of widows by cheating them. *Then they pretend that they are good* by praying long prayers *publicly*. God will certainly punish them severely!"

MARK 12:41-44

THEME: *Jesus told them that a poor widow's tiny sacrificial offering was worth more in God's sight than large amounts of money from rich people.*

⁴¹ Later, Jesus sat down *in the Temple courtyard* opposite the boxes in which people put offerings. *As he was sitting there*, he watched as all the people put money in the box. Many rich people put in large amounts of money. ⁴² Then a poor widow came along and put in two small copper coins, which had a very small value. ⁴³⁻⁴⁴ He gathered his disciples around him and said to them, "The truth is that these other people have a lot of money, *but they gave only a small part of it*. But this woman, who is very poor, has put in all the money that she had to pay for the things she needs. *So God considers that this poor widow has put more money into the box than all the other people!*"

MARK 13:1-2

THEME: *Jesus prophesied that the Temple would be completely destroyed.*

13 ¹ While Jesus was leaving the Temple area, one of his disciples said to him, "Teacher, look at how marvelous *these huge stones are* and how wonderful *these buildings are!*" ² Jesus said to him, "Yes, these buildings that you are looking at [RHQ] *are wonderful*, but I *want to tell you something about them*. They will be destroyed {*Foreign invaders will destroy them*} *completely, with the result that no stone here in this Temple area will be left on top of another stone.*"

MARK 13:3-37

THEME: *Jesus taught his disciples about the events that will precede his coming again.*

³ After they arrived on Olive Tree Hill across *the valley* from the Temple, Jesus sat down. When Peter, James, John, and Andrew were alone with him, they asked him, ⁴ "Tell us, when will *that happen to the buildings of the Temple?* Tell us what will happen that will show us that all these things *that God has planned* are about to be finished {that God is about to finish all these things *that he has planned*}." ⁵ Jesus replied to them, "*I cannot give you a simple answer to your questions. All I will say is*, beware that no one deceives you *concerning what will happen!*" ⁶ Many people will come and say <that I sent them/that they have my authority> [MTY]. They will say, 'I am *the Messiah!*' They will deceive many people. ⁷ Whenever people tell you about wars *that are close* or wars that are far away, do not be troubled. *God has said* that those things must happen. *But when they do happen, do not think that God will finish all that he has planned* at that time! ⁸ *Groups who live in various countries will fight each other, and various governments will fight each other. There will also be big earthquakes in various places; and there will be famines. Yet, when these things happen, people will have only just begun to suffer. The first things that they suffer will be like the first pains a woman suffers who is about to bear a child. They will suffer much more after that.*

⁹ "Be ready for *what people will do to you at that time*. Because you believe in me, they will arrest you and put you on trial before the religious councils. <In the synagogue/In the Jewish meeting place>, you will be beaten {others will beat you}. You will be put {*People will put you*} on trial in the presence of high government authorities. As a result, you will be able to tell them *about me*. ¹⁰ My good message must be proclaimed {*You must proclaim my good message*} to *people in all people-groups before God finishes all that he has planned*. ¹¹ And when people arrest you in order to prosecute you

because you believe in me, do not worry before that happens about what you will say. Instead, say what God puts into your mind at that time. Then it will not be just you who will be speaking. It will be the Holy Spirit who will be speaking through you. ¹² Other evil things will happen: People who do not believe in me will <betray/help others seize> their brothers and sisters in order that the government can execute them. Parents will betray their children, and children will betray their parents so that the government will kill their parents. ¹³ In general, you will be hated by most [HYP] people {most [HYP] people will hate you} because you believe in me. But all you who continue to trust in me strongly until your life is finished will be saved {God will save all you who continue to trust in me strongly until your life ends}.

¹⁴ During that time the disgusting thing/person that the prophet Daniel described will enter the Temple. It/He will defile the Temple when he enters it and will cause people to abandon it. When you see it/him standing there where it/he should not be, you should run away quickly! (May everyone who is reading this pay attention to this warning from Jesus!) At that time those people who are in Judea district must flee to higher hills. ¹⁵ Those people who are outside their houses must not enter their houses in order to get anything before they run away. ¹⁶ Those who are working in a field must not return to their houses in order to get additional clothes before they flee. ¹⁷ But I feel very sorry for women who will be pregnant and women who will be nursing their babies in those days, because it will be very difficult for them to run away! ¹⁸⁻¹⁹ In those days people will suffer very severely. People have never suffered like that since the time when God first created the world until now; and people will not suffer that way again. So pray that this painful time will not happen in <winter/the rainy season>, when it will be hard to travel. ²⁰ If the Lord God had not decided that he would shorten that time when people suffer so much, everyone would die. But he has decided to shorten that time because he is concerned about you people whom he has chosen [DOU]. ²¹⁻²² At that time people who will falsely say that they are Messiahs and prophets will appear. Then they will perform many kinds <of miracles/of things that ordinary people cannot do> [DOU]. They will even try to deceive you people whom God has chosen, but they will not be able to do that. So at that time if someone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or if someone says, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it! ²³ Be alert! Remember that I have warned you about all this before it happens!

²⁴ After the time when people suffer like that, the sun will become dark, the moon will not shine, ²⁵ the stars will fall from the sky, and all things in the sky will be shaken {God will cause all things in the sky to shake}. ²⁶ Then people will see me, the one who came from heaven, coming through the clouds powerfully and gloriously. ²⁷ Then I will send out my angels in order that they gather together the people whom God has chosen from everywhere, and that includes all the most remote places on earth [IDM, DOU].

²⁸ Now I want you to learn something from this parable about the way fig trees grow. In this area, when their branches become tender and their leaves begin to sprout, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ Similarly, when you see what I have just described happening, you yourselves will know that it is very near the time for me to return [MTY]. It will be as though I am already at the door [HEN]. ³⁰ Keep this in mind: You have observed the things that I have done and said, but all of those events that I have just told you about will happen before all of you will die. ³¹ You can be certain that these things that I have prophesied will happen. You can be more certain of that than you can be certain that the earth and what is in the sky will stay in place. ³² But no one knows the exact time when I will return. The angels in heaven also do not know. Even I, God's son, do not know. Only my Father knows. ³³ So be ready, like people who are waiting for an important man to come, because you do not know when that time will come when all these events will happen! ³⁴ When a man who wants to travel to a distant place is about to leave his house, he tells his servants that they should manage the house. He tells each one what he should do. Then he tells the doorkeeper to be ready for his return. ³⁵ That man must always be ready, because he does not know whether his master will return in the evening, at midnight, when the rooster crows, or at dawn. Similarly, you also must always be ready, because you do not know when I will return. ³⁶ May it not happen that when I come suddenly, I will find that you are not ready! ³⁷ These words that I am saying to you disciples I am saying to everyone who believes in me: Always be ready! That is what Jesus warned his disciples.

MARK 14:1-2

THEME: The Jewish leaders planned how they could arrest Jesus without starting a riot.

14 ¹ It was only two days before the people <celebrated/started to celebrate> for one week the festival which they called Passover. During those days they also <celebrated the festival of Unleavened Bread/ate bread that had no yeast in it>. The chief priests and the men who taught the Jewish laws were planning how they could seize Jesus secretly. They wanted to accuse him to the Roman authorities so that they would execute him. ² But they were saying to one another, "We must not do it during the celebration, because, if we do it then, the people will be very angry with us and riot!"

MARK 14:3-11

THEME: Jesus commended a woman who extravagantly anointed Jesus in anticipation of his death. The chief priests agreed to pay Judas if he would help them seize Jesus.

³ Jesus was at Bethany town in the house of Simon, whom Jesus had healed from leprosy. While they were eating, a woman came to him. She was carrying a stone jar that contained expensive fragrant perfume called nard. She opened the jar and then she poured the perfume on Jesus' head. ⁴ One of the people who were present became angry and said to the others, "<It is terrible that she wasted that perfume! Why did she waste that perfume?> [RHQ] ⁵ It could have been sold {We could have sold it} for <a huge amount of money/an amount of money for which a person works for a year>, and then

the money could have been given {we could have given the money} to poor people!" So he rebuked her. ⁶ But Jesus said, "Stop scolding her! She has done to me what I consider to be very appropriate/delightful. So <you should not bother her!/why do you bother her?> [RHQ] ⁷ You will always have poor people among you. So you can help them whenever you want to. But I will not be here among you much longer. So it is good for her to show now that she appreciates me. ⁸ It is appropriate that she has done what she was able to do. It is as if she knew that I was going to die soon and has anointed my body for their burying it. ⁹ I will tell you this: Wherever the good message about me is preached {people preach the good message} throughout the world, what she has done will be told {people will tell others what she has done to me}, and as a result people will remember her."

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot (OR, the man from Kerioth village) went to the chief priests in order to talk to them about helping them to seize Jesus. He did that even though he was one of the twelve disciples! ¹¹ When they heard what he was willing to do for them, they were very happy. They promised that they would give him a large amount of money for doing that. Judas agreed, so they gave him the money. As a result, he began watching for an opportunity <to betray Jesus/to enable Jesus' enemies to seize him>.

MARK 14:12-17

THEME: Two disciples followed Jesus' instructions and prepared the Passover meal.

¹² Two days later, when they killed the lambs for the festival at the beginning of the week when people ate bread that had no yeast in it, Jesus' disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare the meal for the Passover celebration in order that you can eat it with us?" ¹³ So he chose two of his disciples to prepare everything. He said to them, "Go into Jerusalem city. A man will meet you, who will be carrying a large jar full of water. Follow him. ¹⁴ When he enters a house, say to the man who owns the house, 'Our teacher wants us to prepare the meal of the Passover celebration so that he can eat it with us his disciples. <Please show us the room that he arranged with you about./Where is the room that he arranged with you about?> [RHQ]' ¹⁵ He will show you a large room that is on the upper floor of the house. It will be furnished and ready for us to eat a meal in it. Then prepare the meal there for us." ¹⁶ So the two disciples left. They went into the city and found everything to be just like he had told them. They prepared the meal for the Passover celebration and then returned to Jesus and the other disciples. ¹⁷ When it was evening, Jesus arrived at that house with the twelve disciples.

MARK 14:18-26

THEME: During the Passover meal, Jesus prophesied that one disciple would betray him, and he gave them the bread and wine which he said represented his body and blood which would be sacrificed.

¹⁸ As they were all sitting there and eating, Jesus said, "Listen carefully to this: One of you will enable my enemies to seize me. Specifically, it is one of you who will do this in spite of the fact that he is eating with me right now!" ¹⁹ The disciples became very sad and they said to him one by one, "Surely <it is not I!/I am not the one, am I?> [RHQ]" ²⁰ Then he said to them, "It is one of you twelve disciples, the one who is dipping bread into the sauce in the dish along with me. ²¹ It is certain that I, the one who came from heaven, will die, because that is what has been {what the prophets have} written about me. But there will be terrible punishment for the man by whom I will be betrayed {who will <betray me/help my enemies to seize me>}! In fact, it would be better for that man if he had never been born!"

²² While they were eating, he took a flat loaf of bread and thanked God for it. Then he broke it into pieces and gave it to them and said to them, "This bread represents [MET] my body. Take it and eat it." ²³ Afterwards, he took a cup that contained wine and thanked God for it. Then he gave it to them, and then, as they all drank from it, ²⁴ he said to them, "This wine represents [MET] my blood, which is about to be shed {which is about to flow from my body} when my enemies kill me. With this blood I will sign the agreement that God has made to forgive the sins of many people. ²⁵ I want you to know this: I will not drink any more wine in this way until the time when I drink it with a new meaning when I begin to rule as a king." ²⁶ After they sang a hymn, they went out toward Olive Tree Hill.

MARK 14:27-31

THEME: Jesus predicted that Peter would deny three times that he knew Jesus.

²⁷ While they were on their way, Jesus said to them, "It has been {The prophets have} written in the Scriptures that God said about me, 'I will kill the shepherd and his sheep will scatter.' Those words will come true. When they are about to capture me, all of you will leave me and run away. ²⁸ But after I have been made {God has made me} alive again, I will go ahead of you to Galilee district and meet you there." ²⁹ Then Peter said to him, "Perhaps all the other disciples will leave you, but not I! I will not leave you!" ³⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "The truth is that this very night, before the rooster crows a second time, you yourself will deny three times that you know me!" ³¹ But Peter replied strongly, "Even if they kill me as I defend you, I will never deny that I know you!" And all the other disciples said the same thing.

MARK 14:32-42

THEME: *While the disciples slept, Jesus prayed that God would spare him from the coming suffering.*

³² On the way, Jesus and the disciples came to the place that *people* call Gethsemane. Then he said to *some/eight* of his disciples, “Stay here while I pray!” ³³ Then he took Peter, James, and John with him. He became extremely distressed, and he said to them, ³⁴ “I [SYN] am very sorrowful. *It is as if I were about to die. You men stay here and keep awake!*” ³⁵ He went a bit further and threw himself on the ground. Then he prayed that if it were possible, he would not *have to suffer* [MTY]. ³⁶ He said, “O my Father, *because you are able to do everything, rescue me so that I do not have to suffer now* [MTY]! But do not *do* what I want. Instead, *do what you want!*” ³⁷ Then he returned and found his *disciples* sleeping. He *woke them up and* said, “Simon! *<I am disappointed that you fell asleep and that you were not able to stay awake for just a short time!/Why is it that you fell asleep and that you were not able to stay awake for just one hour?>* [RHQ]” ³⁸ *And he said to them, “You want to do what I say, but you are not strong enough [MTY] to actually do it. So keep awake and pray in order that you can resist when something like this tempts you!”* ³⁹ Then he went away again and prayed again what he prayed before. ⁴⁰ When he returned, he found that they were sleeping again because they were so sleepy that they could not keep their eyes open. *Because they were ashamed*, they did not know what to say to him *when he awakened them*. ⁴¹ *Then he went and prayed again.* He returned a third time; *and he found them sleeping again.* He *woke all of them and* said to them, “*<I am disappointed that you are sleeping again! /Why are you sleeping again?>* [RHQ] *You have slept enough. The time for me to suffer is about to begin. Look! Someone is about to enable sinful men to seize me, the one who came from heaven.*” ⁴² *So get up! Let’s go toward him! Look! Here comes the one who is enabling them to seize me!*

MARK 14:43-49

THEME: *Judas betrayed Jesus.*

⁴³ While he was still speaking, Judas *arrived. Even though he was one of Jesus’ twelve disciples*, he came *to enable Jesus’ enemies to seize him*. A crowd who carried swords and clubs was with him. The *leaders of the Jewish Council* had sent them. ⁴⁴ *Judas, who was <betraying Jesus/helping Jesus’ enemies to seize him>*, had *previously* told this crowd, “The man whom I kiss is the one *whom you want. When I kiss him, seize him and lead him away while you guard him carefully.*” ⁴⁵ So, when Judas arrived, he immediately went to Jesus and said, “My teacher!” Then he kissed Jesus *on his neck/cheek*. ⁴⁶ Then *the crowd* seized Jesus. ⁴⁷ But one of the *disciples* who was standing nearby drew his *short sword*. He struck the servant of the high priest with it *to kill him, but he only cut off his ear.* ⁴⁸⁻⁴⁹ Jesus said to them, “*<It is ridiculous that you come here to seize me with swords and clubs, as if I were a bandit!/Have you come here to seize me with swords and clubs, as if I were a bandit [RHQ]?< Day after day I was with you in the Temple courtyard teaching the people! Why did you not seize me then? But this is happening in order that what the prophets have written in the Scriptures about me may be fulfilled {may happen}.>*”

MARK 14:50-52

THEME: *Mark ran away.*

⁵⁰ All *the disciples at once* left him and ran away. ⁵¹ At that time, *<a young man/I>* was following Jesus. He/*I* was wearing only a linen cloth around his/*my* body. The crowd seized him/*me*. ⁵² But, *as he/I pulled away from them*, he/*I* left behind the linen cloth *in their hands*, and then he/*I* ran away naked.

MARK 14:53-65

THEME: *After witnesses accusing Jesus contradicted each other, Jesus said that he was the Son of God, the Messiah, after which they decided that Jesus must die.*

⁵³ The men *who had seized Jesus* led him away *to the house where the high priest lived*. All of the Jewish Council were gathering *there*. ⁵⁴ Peter followed Jesus at a distance. He went into the courtyard *of the house where the high priest lived*, and sat there with the men who guarded *the house of the high priest*. He was warming himself beside a fire. ⁵⁵ The chief priests and all the rest of the Jewish Council *had already* tried to find people who would tell lies about Jesus *in order that they could convince the Roman authorities* to execute him. But they did not succeed, ⁵⁶ because, although many people spoke lies about him, they contradicted each other. ⁵⁷ *Finally*, some stood up and accused him falsely by saying, ⁵⁸ “We heard him when he said, ‘I will destroy this Temple that was built by men, and then within three days I will build another temple *<without help from anyone else/that human hands will not build>*.’” ⁵⁹ But, what *some of these men* said also did not agree with *what others of them* said.

⁶⁰ Then the high priest *himself* stood up in front of them and said to Jesus, “Are you not going to reply? What *do you say about* all the things that they are saying in order to accuse you?” ⁶¹ But Jesus was silent and did not reply [DOU]. Then the high priest *tried again*. He asked him, “Are you the Messiah? *Do you say that you are <the Son of God/the man who is also God>?*” ⁶² Jesus said, “I am. Furthermore, you will see me, the one who came from heaven, *ruling beside God, who is completely powerful. You will also see me coming down through the clouds in the sky!*” ⁶³ *In response to Jesus’ words*, the high priest tore his outer garment. *That was their custom to show that he was shocked that Jesus had said that he was equal to God.* Then he said, “We certainly do not [RHQ] need any *more* people who will testify *against this man*, ⁶⁴ because you have heard what he said against God! *He claimed to be equal with God!* Therefore, what have you decided?” They all

said that Jesus was guilty and deserved <to be executed/that they should kill him>. ⁶⁵ Then some of them began spitting on Jesus. They put a blindfold on him, and then they began striking him and saying to him, “*If you are a prophet, tell us who hit you!*” And those who were guarding Jesus struck him with their hands.

MARK 14:66-72

THEME: *As Jesus predicted, Peter denied three times that he knew Jesus.*

⁶⁶ While Peter was outside in the courtyard of the high priest’s house, one of the girls who worked for the high priest came near him. ⁶⁷ When she saw Peter warming himself beside the fire, she looked at him closely. Then she said, “You also were with Jesus, that man from Nazareth town!” ⁶⁸ But he denied it by saying, “I do not know or understand [DOU] what you are talking about!” Then he went away from there to the gate of the courtyard. ⁶⁹ Another servant girl saw him there and said again to the people who were standing nearby, “This man is one of those who have been with that man they arrested.” ⁷⁰ But he denied it again. After a little while, one of those who were standing there said to Peter again, “The way you speak shows that you also are from Galilee district. So it is certain that you are one of those who accompanied Jesus!” ⁷¹ But he began to exclaim, “I do not know the man that you are talking about! Because God knows that I am speaking truthfully, may he punish me if I am lying!” ⁷² Immediately the rooster crowed a second time. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said to him before, “Before the rooster crows a second time, you will deny three times that you know me.” When he realized that he had denied it three times, he started crying.

MARK 15:1-5

THEME: *In the governor Pilate’s presence Jesus refused to answer accusations against him.*

15 ¹ Very early in the morning the chief priests met together with the rest of the Jewish Council, in order to decide how to accuse Jesus before the Roman governor. Their guards tied Jesus’ hands again. They took him to the house of Pilate, the governor, and they started to accuse him, saying “Jesus is claiming that he is a king!” ² Pilate asked Jesus, “Do you claim to be the king of the Jews?” Jesus answered him, “You yourself have said so.” ³ Then the chief priests claimed that Jesus had done many bad things. ⁴ So Pilate asked him again, “Do you have nothing to reply? Listen to how many bad things they are saying that you have done!” ⁵ But he did not say anything more. The result was that Pilate was very much surprised.

MARK 15:6-15

THEME: *At the crowd’s insistence, Pilate released a criminal and gave orders that Jesus should be crucified.*

⁶ It was the governor’s custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one person who was in prison. He customarily released whichever prisoner the people requested. ⁷ At that time there was a man called Barabbas who had been {whom the soldiers had} put in prison with some other men. Those men had murdered some soldiers when they rebelled against the Roman government. ⁸ A crowd approached Pilate and asked him to release someone, just like he customarily did for them during the Passover celebration. ⁹ Pilate answered them, “Would you like me to release for you the man whom you Jewish people say is your king?” ¹⁰ He asked this because he realized what the chief priests were wanting to do. They were accusing Jesus because they were jealous of him because many people were becoming his disciples. ¹¹ But the chief priests urged the crowd to request that Pilate release Barabbas for them instead of Jesus. ¹² Pilate said to them again, “If I release Barabbas, what do you want me to do with the man whom some of you Jews say is your king?” ¹³ Then they shouted again, “Command that your soldiers crucify him!” ¹⁴ Then Pilate said to them, “Why? What crime has he committed?” But they shouted even louder, “Command your soldiers to crucify him!” ¹⁵ So, because Pilate wanted to please the crowd, he released Barabbas for them. Then, after his soldiers had whipped Jesus with leather straps into which they had fastened metal pieces, Pilate told the soldiers to take him away in order that he would be crucified {they would crucify him}.

MARK 15:16-20

THEME: *The soldiers ridiculed Jesus as being a king.*

¹⁶ The soldiers took Jesus into the courtyard of the palace where Pilate lived. That place was the government headquarters. Then they summoned the whole <cohort/group of soldiers> who were on duty there. ¹⁷ After the soldiers gathered together, they put a purple robe on Jesus. Then they placed on his head a crown that they made from branches of thorn bushes. They did those things in order to ridicule him by pretending that he was a king. ¹⁸ Then they greeted him like they would greet a king, in order to ridicule him, saying, “Hooray for the King who rules the Jews!” ¹⁹ They repeatedly struck his head with a reed and spat on him. By kneeling down, they pretended to honor him. ²⁰ When they had finished ridiculing him, they pulled off the purple robe. They put his own clothes on him, and then they led him outside of the city in order to nail him to a cross.

^e Some Greek manuscripts add, “And a rooster crowed.”

MARK 15:21-24

THEME: *After they crucified Jesus the soldiers gambled for his clothing.*

²¹ After Jesus carried his cross a short distance, a man named Simon from Cyrene city came along. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus. He was passing by while he was returning home from outside the city. The soldiers compelled Simon to carry the cross for Jesus. ²² They brought them both to a place that they call Golgotha. That name means, 'a place like a skull'. ²³ Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was {that they} mixed with medicine called myrrh. They wanted him to drink it so that he would not feel so much pain when they crucified him. But he did not drink it. ²⁴ Some of the soldiers took his clothes. Then they nailed him to a cross. Afterwards, they divided his clothes among themselves by gambling with something like dice. They did this in order to determine which piece of clothing each one would get.

MARK 15:25-32

THEME: *People passing by, as well as the Jewish leaders and two criminals crucified with Jesus, insulted him.*

²⁵ It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶ They attached to the cross above Jesus' head a sign on which it had been written {someone had written} the reason why they were nailing him to the cross. But all that it said was, "The King of the Jews." ²⁷ They also nailed to crosses two men who were bandits. They nailed one to a cross at the right side of Jesus and one to a cross at the left side of Jesus. ²⁸ The people who were passing by insulted him by shaking their heads as if he were an evil man. They said, "Aha! You said that you would destroy the Temple and then you would build it again within three days." ²⁹ If you could do that, then rescue yourself by coming down from the cross!" ³⁰ The chief priests, along with the men who taught the Jewish laws, also wanted to make fun of Jesus. So they said to each other, "He claims to have saved others from their sicknesses [IRO] but he cannot save himself!" ³¹ He said, "I am the Messiah, I am the King who rules the people of Israel." If his words are true, he should come down now from the cross! Then we will believe him!" The two men who were crucified beside him also insulted him.

MARK 15:33-41

THEME: *As several women who had accompanied Jesus watched, he died, after which the Temple curtain split into two parts and the Roman officer pronounced that Jesus was the Son of God.*

³³ At noon the whole land became dark, and it stayed dark until three o'clock in the afternoon. ³⁴ At three o'clock Jesus shouted loudly, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" That means, "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" ³⁵ When some of the people who were standing there heard the word 'Eloi', misunderstanding it, they said, "Listen! He is calling for the prophet Elijah!" ³⁶ One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine. He placed it on the tip of a reed, and then he held it up for Jesus to suck out the wine that was in it. While he was doing that, someone said, "Wait! Let's see whether Elijah will come to take him down from the cross!" ³⁷ And then, after Jesus shouted loudly, he stopped breathing and died. ³⁸ At that moment the heavy thick curtain that closed off the most holy place in the Temple split into two pieces from top to bottom. That showed that ordinary people could now go into the presence of God. ³⁹ The officer who supervised the soldiers who nailed Jesus to the cross was standing in front of Jesus. When he saw how Jesus died, he exclaimed, "Truly, this man was <the Son of God/the man who was also God>!" ⁴⁰⁻⁴¹ There were also some women there, watching these events from a distance. They had accompanied Jesus when he was in Galilee district, and they had provided what he needed. They had come with him to Jerusalem. Among those women was Mary from Magdala town. There was another Mary, who was the mother of the younger James and of Joses. There was also Salome.

MARK 15:42-47

THEME: *Several women watched as Joseph and others buried Jesus' body in a cave after getting permission from Pilate.*

⁴²⁻⁴³ When evening was near, a man named Joseph from Arimathea town came there. He was a member of the Jewish Council, one whom everyone respected. He was also one of those who had been waiting expectantly for the time when God would send his king to begin to rule. He knew that, according to Jewish law, people's bodies had to be buried {someone had to bury people's bodies} on the day they died. He also realized that it was the day when people prepared things for <the Jewish day of rest/the Sabbath>, and that the Sabbath would start when the sun set. So he became courageous and went to Pilate and asked Pilate to permit him to take the body of Jesus down from the cross and bury it immediately. ⁴⁴ Pilate was surprised when he heard that Jesus was already dead. So he summoned the officer who was in charge of the soldiers who crucified Jesus, and he asked him if Jesus had already died. ⁴⁵ When the officer told Pilate that Jesus was dead, Pilate allowed Joseph to take away the body. ⁴⁶ After Joseph bought a linen cloth, he and others took Jesus' body down from the cross. They wrapped it in the linen cloth and laid it in a tomb that previously had been dug out of the rock cliff. Then they rolled a huge flat stone in front of the entrance to the tomb. ⁴⁷ Mary from Magdala village and Mary the mother of Joses were watching where Jesus' body was placed {where they placed Jesus' body}.

^f Some Greek manuscripts add v. 28, "In that way, they fulfilled the words that Isaiah wrote in Scripture. He wrote, 'He was considered {They considered him} to be a criminal'."

MARK 16:1-8

THEME: Two days later several women were astonished to find Jesus' tomb empty.

16 ¹ On Saturday evening when <the Sabbath/the Jewish day of rest> had ended, Mary from Magdala village, Mary the mother of the younger James, and Salome bought fragrant ointment. *The Jews had a custom of anointing bodies before they buried them, and the women wanted to follow this custom.* ² So very early on Sunday, just after the sun rose, they took the fragrant ointment and started toward the tomb. ³ While they were going there, they were saying to each other, "Who will roll away for us the stone that blocks the entrance of the tomb?" ⁴ After they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone had already been rolled away {that someone had already rolled away the stone}. *They were surprised, because it would have been difficult to move such a huge stone.* ⁵ They entered the tomb and saw an angel who looked like a young man. He was sitting at the right side of the cave. He was wearing a shining white robe. As a result, they were astonished. ⁶ The young man said to them, "Do not be astonished! I know that you are looking for Jesus, the man from Nazareth town, who was nailed to a cross {whom they nailed to a cross}. But he has become alive again! He is not here! Look! Here is the place where they placed his body." ⁷ But, instead of remaining here, go and tell his disciples. Particularly be sure that you tell Peter. Tell them, 'Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee district, and you will see him there, just like he told you previously!' ⁸ The women went outside and ran from the tomb. They were trembling because they were afraid, and they were astonished. But they did not say anything to anyone about this while they were going, because they were afraid.

[The end of Mark's Gospel was lost or destroyed long ago. Then someone wrote verses 9-20 from what he remembered about those events. That ending is given below.]

MARK 16:9-14

THEME: Jesus rebuked the disciples for not believing the reports of his being alive again.

⁹ When Jesus became alive again early on Sunday morning, he appeared first to Mary from Magdala town. She was the woman from whom he had previously expelled seven evil spirits. ¹⁰ She went to those who had been with Jesus, while they were mourning and crying. She told them what she had seen. ¹¹ But when she told them that Jesus was alive again and that she had seen him, they refused to believe it. ¹² Later that day, Jesus appeared to two of his disciples while they were walking from Jerusalem to their homes in the surrounding area. But they did not recognize him quickly because he looked very different. ¹³ After they recognized him, those two went back to Jerusalem. They told his other followers what had happened, but they did not believe it. ¹⁴ Later he appeared to the eleven apostles while they were eating. He rebuked them because they had stubbornly refused to believe the reports of those who saw him after he had become alive again.

MARK 16:15-20

THEME: Miracles began to happen after Jesus instructed his disciples to preach the gospel everywhere and he told them that miracles would accompany their ministry.

¹⁵ Later he said to them, "Go into the whole world and preach the good message to everyone! ¹⁶ Everyone who believes your message and who is baptized will be saved {God will save}. But everyone who does not believe it will be condemned {God will condemn}. ¹⁷ Those who believe my good message will perform miracles. Specifically, by my power they will expel evil spirits. They will speak in languages that they have not learned. ¹⁸ If they pick up snakes accidentally or if they drink any poisonous liquid accidentally, they will not be hurt. Whenever they put their hands on sick people in order that God will heal them, those sick people will become well."

¹⁹ After the Lord Jesus had said this to the disciples, he was taken {God took him} up into heaven. Then he sat down on his throne beside God to rule with him. ²⁰ As for the disciples, they went out from Jerusalem, and then they preached everywhere. Wherever they went, the Lord enabled them to perform miracles. By doing that, he showed people that God's message is true.]

The Gospel that was written by Luke

Luke 1:1-4

THEME: Luke told Theophilus why he was writing about all that Jesus did.

1 ¹⁻² My noble *friend* Theophilus, many people saw the things that *Jesus* did while he was with us, from the time when he started [MTY] *his ministry*. They served God *by teaching people* the message *about the Lord Jesus*. Many of those who heard what they taught wrote down for us accounts of the things that *Jesus did from the time when he began his ministry*. ³ I myself have studied carefully these accounts. So I decided that it would be good for me also to write for you(sg) an accurate account of these matters. ⁴ I want you to know the truth about what you have been taught {what others have taught you}.

Luke 1:5-25

THEME: An angel told Zechariah that his wife Elizabeth would bear a son, John.

⁵ When King Herod *the Great* ruled Judea *district*, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He belonged to the *group of priests* called the Abijah group. He and his wife Elizabeth were both descended from the *first priest of Israel*, Aaron. ⁶ God considered that both of them were righteous, because they constantly obeyed without fault everything that God had commanded. ⁷ But they had no children, because Elizabeth was unable to bear children. Furthermore, she and her husband were very old.

⁸ One day Zechariah's group was doing their work *in the Temple in Jerusalem*, and he was serving as a priest in God's presence. ⁹ Following their custom, *the other priests* chose him by lot to enter the Lord's temple and burn incense. ¹⁰ While he was burning the incense, many people were outside *in the courtyard*, praying. ¹¹ Then an angel whom God had sent appeared to him. The angel was standing at the right side of the place *where the priests burned* incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw the angel, he was startled and became very afraid. ¹³ But the angel said to him, "Zechariah, do not be afraid! When you(sg) prayed *asking God for a son* (OR, *that God would send the Messiah*), God heard what you prayed. So your wife Elizabeth shall bear a son for you. You must name him John. ¹⁴ He will cause you to be very happy, and many other people will also be happy because he is born. ¹⁵ God will consider him to be very important. He must never drink wine or any other alcoholic drink, *in order that he will be completely dedicated to God*. He will be controlled by the Holy Spirit {The Holy Spirit will control him} from the time that he is born. ¹⁶ He will *persuade* many people in Israel to turn away *from their sins and please* the Lord their God. ¹⁷ As God's Spirit enables him *to preach* powerfully as *the prophet* Elijah did, he will precede *the Messiah*. He will cause parents [SYN] to act *peacefully* toward their children *again*. He will cause *many* people who do not obey God *to hear and obey* the wise things that righteous people *tell them*. He will do this in order to make *many* people to be ready when the Lord comes."

¹⁸ Then Zechariah said to the angel, "I am very old, and my wife is also so old *that she cannot bear a child*. So <I cannot believe that what you(sg) said *will happen!*/how can I believe that what you(sg) said *will happen?*> [RHQ]"

¹⁹ Then the angel said to him, "I am God's *chief angel*, Gabriel! *I do what God tells me*, because I constantly stand in God's presence! I was sent {He sent me} to tell you(sg) this good message *about what will happen to you*. ²⁰ What I have told you will certainly happen at the time *God decides*, but you did not believe my words. So now *God will cause* that you will be unable to talk until the day *your son is born!*"

²¹ While Zechariah and the angel were talking, the people *in the courtyard* were waiting for Zechariah *to come out*. They wondered, "Why is he staying in the Temple for such a long time?" ²² When he came out, he was not able to speak to them. Because he could not talk, he made motions with his hands *to try to convey what had happened*. Then they realized that he had seen <a vision *from God/something that God showed him*> while he was in the Temple.

²³ When Zechariah's time to work *as a priest in the Temple* was finished, he *left Jerusalem* and returned to his home.

²⁴ Some time later his wife Elizabeth became pregnant [EUP]. She did not go out of her house for five months, *because she knew that people would laugh at her during that time if she told them that she was pregnant*. ²⁵ But she said to herself, "God has enabled me to become pregnant. At this time he has pitied me and has caused that I will no longer be ashamed *because I have no children!*"

Luke 1:26-38

THEME: An angel told a virgin named Mary that she would bear a son, to be named Jesus.

²⁶ When Elizabeth had been *pregnant* [EUP] *for almost* six months, the angel Gabriel was sent by God {God sent the angel Gabriel} *again*. ²⁷ *This time* he went to Nazareth town in Galilee *district*, to a virgin whose name was Mary. It had been {Her parents had} promised that she would marry a man named Joseph, who was descended from *King David*. ²⁸ The angel said

to her, "Greetings! <The Lord/God> is with you(sg) and you will be greatly blessed {has decided to greatly bless you}!"²⁹ But Mary was greatly confused *when she heard* that. She wondered what *the angel meant* by these words.³⁰ Then the angel said to her, "Mary, God is very pleased with you(sg), so do not be afraid.³¹ You will become pregnant and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus.³² He will become great. He will be called {People will call him} <the Son of God/the man who is also God>. God, the Lord, will make him a king [MTY] as his ancestor *King David* was.³³ He will be the King of the Jews, the descendants [MTY] of *your ancestor Jacob*, forever. He will rule as king forever!"

³⁴ Then Mary said to the angel, "I am a virgin, so how can I *have a baby*?"³⁵ The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come to you(sg) and the power of God [MTY/EUP] will be on you *to enable you to become pregnant*. So the child *you will* bear will be completely set apart {give himself completely} to obey God, and he will be called {people will say that he is} <the Son of God/the man who is also God>.³⁶ *I also need to tell you something else*. Your cousin Elizabeth is very old, and it was thought {people said} that she could not bear any children. But she has been *pregnant* [EUP] *for almost* six months, and will bear a son!³⁷ *You should not be surprised at that*, because God can do everything!"³⁸ Then Mary said, "All right, I want to serve <the Lord/God>, so may what you(sg) have said about me come true!" Then the angel left her.

Luke 1:39-45

THEME: *Mary visited Elizabeth.*

³⁹ Very soon after that, Mary got ready and went quickly to a town in the highlands of Judea *district*.⁴⁰ She entered Zechariah's house and greeted *his wife* Elizabeth.⁴¹ As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary greet her, the baby leaped inside *Elizabeth's* womb. The Holy Spirit took complete control of Elizabeth,⁴² and she said loudly *to Mary*, "God has blessed you *more than* he has blessed *any other* woman, and *he has* blessed the child you will bear!⁴³ <I am not worthy that God would allow you to visit me! Why is God allowing you to visit me?> [RHQ] You will be the mother of my Lord!⁴⁴ *I realize this because* as soon as I heard you greet me, the baby inside my womb leaped because he was so happy *that you had come!*⁴⁵ God is pleased with you *because* you believed that what <the Lord/God> told you would come true."

Luke 1:46-56

THEME: *Mary praised God.*

⁴⁶ Then Mary *praised God* by saying/singing:

Oh, how I [SYN] praise <the Lord/God>!

⁴⁷ I rejoice in my inner being because God is the one who saves me.

⁴⁸ I was only his lowly servant girl, but he did not forget me.

So from now on, people living in all <ages/future time> will say that God was pleased with me,

⁴⁹ because *they will* hear about the things that God [MTY], the mighty one, has done for me.

He [MTY] is awesome!

⁵⁰ He acts mercifully from one generation to the next toward those who respect him.

⁵¹ He shows *people* that he [MTY] is very powerful. He scatters those who think proudly within their inner beings.

⁵² He sends mighty kings away and does not let them rule [MTY] any more, but he honors the people who are oppressed (OR, humble).

⁵³ He gives good things to eat to those who are hungry, but he sends away the rich people without giving them anything.

⁵⁴⁻⁵⁵ He promised to Abraham and all our other ancestors who descended from him that he would act mercifully toward them forever.

And now he has remembered what he promised.

So he has helped me and all the other people of [MTY] Israel who serve him.

⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months. Then she returned to her home.

Luke 1:57-66

THEME: *What happened when John was born.*

⁵⁷ When it was time for Elizabeth to bear her child, she bore a son.⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard how <the Lord/God> had greatly blessed her, so they were happy along with *Elizabeth*.⁵⁹ Seven days later they gathered together for the *ceremony* for circumcising the baby *to show that he belonged to God*. Since his father's name was Zechariah, they wanted to give the baby the same name.⁶⁰ But his mother said, "No, *his name will not be Zechariah*. His name will be John!"⁶¹ So they said to her, "*John* is not the name of any of your(d) relatives, so you(d) should not give him that name!"

⁶² Then they made motions with their hands to his father, *for him* to indicate what name *he* wanted to be given {to give} to his son.⁶³ So he signaled that they *should give him* a tablet *to write on*. *When they gave him one*, he wrote *on it*, "His name is John." All those *who were there* were surprised!⁶⁴ Immediately Zechariah was able to speak again [MTY], and he praised God.⁶⁵ All their neighbors were amazed/awestruck! They told other people who lived all over the highlands of Judea about what had happened.⁶⁶ Everyone who heard about it kept thinking about it. They were saying, "We wonder what work *the child* will do *for God* when he grows up [RHQ]!" They wondered that because *from what had happened they were sure that* God would be helping him [SYN] *in a powerful way*.

Luke 1:67-80

THEME: *Zechariah praised God and predicted what his son would do.*

⁶⁷ After Zechariah's son was born, Zechariah was completely directed by the Holy Spirit {the Holy Spirit completely directed Zechariah} as he spoke these words that came from God:

⁶⁸ Praise the Lord, the God whom *we(inc)*

people of Israel worship,

because he has come to set *us*, his people,

free *from our enemies.*

⁶⁹ He is sending us someone who will powerfully [MTY]

save us,

someone who is *descended from* [MTY] *King David,*

who served God *well.*

⁷⁰ Long ago God caused his prophets to say

that he would do that.

⁷¹ *He* will rescue us from our enemies,

and he will save *us* from the power of

all those who hate us.

⁷² *He will do this because* he has not forgotten

what he promised our ancestors;

he made an agreement that he would act

mercifully to us, their *descendants.*

⁷³ That is what he strongly promised

our ancestor Abraham that he would do.

⁷⁴ God told him that we would be rescued {he would rescue us}

from the power of our enemies,

that he would enable us to serve him

without being afraid,

⁷⁵ that he *would cause us* to be completely

dedicated to him,

and enable us to *live* righteously all of our lives.

⁷⁶ Then Zechariah said this to his little son:

My child, you will be called {*people* will say that you are} a prophet

whom God [MTY/EUP] *has sent;*

you will begin *your work* before <the Lord/Messiah> comes ;

you will prepare *people so that they will be ready* for him.

(OR, you will begin *your work* before the Messiah comes).

⁷⁷ You will tell *God's* people how *he* will forgive them

and save them *from being punished* for their sins.

⁷⁸ Our God will do that because he is very kind to us.

Just like a new day begins when the sun rises [MET],

God will do that new thing for us

when the Messiah comes to us from heaven.

⁷⁹ *People who do not know God* [MET] *are like* those

who sit in the darkness.

They are afraid [MTY] that they will soon die.

But when the Messiah tells us God's message,

it will be like causing such people to see a bright light.

He will guide us [SYN] so that we will be living peacefully.

⁸⁰ Later, Zechariah's son grew up and became spiritually strong. Then he lived in a desolate region until he began to preach to the Israelite people.

Luke 2:1-7

THEME: *Jesus was born in Bethlehem.*

2 ¹ About that time the Emperor Augustus commanded that <*his officials must write down the names/a census be taken*> of all the people who lived in countries *controlled* by the Roman *government* {that the Roman *government controlled*}, so that *the government could collect taxes from them.* ² That was the first time that they <wrote down the names/took a census> in Syria *province, which included Judea district.* They did this while Quirinius was the governor of the province. ³ Every person had to go to the town where his *ancestors* lived, so that *the officials* could write down their names. ⁴ So, because Joseph was a descendant of *King David*, he went up from Nazareth, the town in Galilee *district where he lived*, to Bethlehem town in Judea *district.* That was the town where *King David grew up.* ⁵ Joseph went with Mary, who was *considered* {whom *people considered*} to be his wife, who was now pregnant. They went so that they could put his name

and Mary's name *in the record book*.⁶⁻⁷ When they arrived *in Bethlehem*, there was no place for them to stay in the house where travelers stay. *So they stayed in a cattle shed*. When the time for Mary to give birth arrived, she gave birth to her first son there. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and placed him in a trough where *people* put food for the animals.

Luke 2:8-20

THEME: *Responding to the angel's announcement, shepherds went to see Jesus.*

⁸ That night, there were *some* shepherds who were taking care of their sheep *as usual* in the fields near *Bethlehem*.⁹ An angel from God appeared to them. A great light *◀from the Lord/from God▶* shone on them and around them. So they became very afraid.¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid! I have come to tell you good news, which will *make you very happy!* This message is for everyone *to hear!*"¹¹ *The message is that* today a baby has been born in *Bethlehem*, the town where *King David* grew up. That baby will *eventually* save you *from the guilt of your sins!* He will be the Messiah, your Lord!¹² I will tell you how you *will recognize him* (OR, how you will know *that what I say is true*): *In Bethlehem* you will find a baby who has been wrapped {*whose mother* has wrapped him} in strips of cloth and placed in a trough where *people* put food for the animals."

¹³ Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven appeared and joined the other angel. They all praised God, singing/saying,¹⁴ "May *all the angels* in the highest heaven praise God! And on the earth may the people to whom God has shown his favor have peace *with him!*"

¹⁵ After the angels left them *and returned* to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem to see this *wonderful* thing that has happened, which *◀the Lord/God▶* has told us about!"¹⁶ So they went quickly. They found the *place where* Mary and Joseph *were staying*, and *they saw* the baby lying in the trough where *people* put food for the animals.¹⁷ Then they told *Mary and Joseph and others* what had been told them {what *the angel* had told them} about this child.¹⁸ Everyone who heard what was said by the shepherds {what the shepherds said} to them was amazed.¹⁹ But Mary *did not talk to others about what the angels said*; she just kept thinking very much about it.²⁰ The shepherds returned *to their sheep*. They kept praising God very much for all the things that they had heard and seen, *because* everything *happened* exactly like *the angels* told them.

Luke 2:21-24

THEME: *They circumcised Jesus and presented him to the Lord.*

²¹ Seven days later, when *the priests* circumcised the baby, *his parents* named him Jesus. That was the name that *they were told* by the angel {the angel told them} to give him before Mary became pregnant.

²²⁻²³ It had been written by Moses {Moses had written} *long ago* in a law that God gave him, that when a woman gave birth to her first son, the parents had to take him *to the Temple* in Jerusalem in order that they might dedicate him *◀to the Lord/to God▶*. So when the time came for them to do those rituals so that *God would consider* them pure again, Mary and Joseph took Jesus there.²⁴ God had commanded in his laws that if the first child *of a couple* was a boy, his parents should offer as a sacrifice to God two turtledoves or two young pigeons. *So Joseph and Mary gave the priest two birds so he could offer them.*

Luke 2:25-35

THEME: *Simeon prophesied about what Jesus would do.*

²⁵ At that time there was an *old* man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. He habitually did what was pleasing to God and he obeyed God's laws. The Holy Spirit was *directing* him as he was waiting for *God* [MTY] to encourage the Israelite people by *sending the Messiah*.²⁶ It was *previously* revealed by the Holy Spirit {The Holy Spirit *previously* revealed} to him that he would see God's *promised* Messiah before he died.²⁷ When Joseph and Mary brought their baby Jesus *to the Temple* in order to perform the rituals that *God had commanded* in his laws, the Spirit led Simeon to enter the Temple courtyard, and *revealed to him that Jesus was the Messiah*.²⁸ So he took Jesus up in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹⁻³² Lord, you promised me that I would see the *one* [MTY] *who would enable* you to save *people* of all people-groups *from the guilt of their sins*. He will be [MET] *like* a light that will reveal *your truth* to non-Jews, and he will cause *people* to think highly of your people, the Israelite people. Since I [SYN] have now seen this one that you promised to send, now let me die peacefully.

³³ His parents marveled about what *Simeon* said about *Jesus*. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary,³⁴ "Note what I say: *God* has determined that because of this child, many Israelite people will *turn away from God*, and many others will turn to God [MET]. Although he will be like a sign [MET] *to warn people*, many people will oppose him.³⁵ As a result, the *evil* thoughts of many people will be made evident {he will reveal the *evil* thoughts of many people}. *Furthermore, the cruel things that they will do to him* [MET] *will be like* a sword that will pierce your *◀soul/inner being▶*."

Luke 2:36-38

THEME: Anna praised God for Jesus and told others about him.

³⁶ There was also *in the Temple courtyard* a very old woman named Anna. She was a prophetess. Her father Phanuel was a member of the tribe of Asher. After she had been married seven years, her husband died. ³⁷ After that, she lived until she was eighty-four years old, and she was still a widow. She stayed in the Temple *area* all the time, night and day, worshipping God. She often *abstained from food/fasted* as she prayed. ³⁸ *While Joseph and Mary and the baby were still in the Temple*, Anna came to them. She thanked God *for the baby*. Then she spoke about Jesus to many people who were expecting *God to send the Messiah* [MTY] to set *the people of* [MTY] Jerusalem free *from their enemies*.

Luke 2:39-40

THEME: Jesus grew up in Nazareth.

³⁹ After Joseph and Mary had finished performing the rituals that *the Lord/God* required *the parents of a first son* to perform, they returned to their own town, Nazareth, in Galilee *district*. ⁴⁰ As the child grew up, he became strong and very wise, and God was very pleased with him.

Luke 2:41-52

THEME: What Jesus did in the Temple when he was a boy.

⁴¹ Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem to *celebrate* the Passover festival. ⁴² So when Jesus was twelve years old, they went up *to Jerusalem* as they always did. ⁴³ When the celebration ended, his parents started to return home, but Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. *His parents* did not realize that *Jesus stayed there*. ⁴⁴ They thought that he was with the other people who were traveling with them. They walked all day. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ They did not find him, so they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶ Two days later, they found him. He was in the Temple *courtyard*, sitting with the *Jewish* religious teachers. He was listening to what they said, and he was asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard what he *said* was amazed at how much he understood and *how well* he answered *the questions that the teachers asked*. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were very surprised. His mother said to him, "My son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been very worried as we(exc) have been searching for you!" ⁴⁹ He said to them, *speaking about the Temple being God his Father's house*, "*I am surprised that you(dI) did not know where to find me! Why did you not know where to find me?*" [RHQ] *«You(dI) should have known that it was necessary for me to be in my Father's house! Did you not know that it was necessary for me to be in my Father's house?»* [RHQ]" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand *the meaning of* what he said to them. ⁵¹ Then he returned with them down to Nazareth. He always obeyed them. But his mother kept thinking about all those things.

⁵² *As the years passed*, Jesus continued to become wiser and he grew taller. God and people continued to approve of him more and more.

Luke 3:1-20

THEME: What John the Baptizer preached.

3 ¹ When the Emperor Tiberius had been ruling *the Roman Empire* for fifteen years, and while Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea *district*, and Herod *Antipas* was ruling Galilee *district*, and his brother Philip was ruling Iturea and Trachonitis *districts*, and Lysanius was ruling Abilene *district*, ² and while Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests *in Jerusalem*, God gave messages to Zechariah's son John while he was living in the desolate region. ³ So John went all over the area close to the Jordan *River*. He kept telling people, "If you want *God* to forgive you for your sins, you must *repent/turn away from your sinful behavior* before you ask me to baptize you!"

⁴ John was the one who *fulfilled* these words that had *been written* by the prophet Isaiah {that the prophet Isaiah had written} on a scroll *long ago*:

In a desolate area, someone [SYN] will be heard shouting *to the people who pass by*,

Prepare yourselves *to receive* the Lord when he comes!

Make yourselves ready so that you will be prepared when he comes, just like people straighten out the road [MET] *for an important official* [MET, DOU]!

⁵ *Just like people* level off all the places where the land rises and *just like they* fill all the ravines, and *just like people* make the road straight wherever it is crooked, and *just like people* make smooth the bumps in the road,

Similarly you need to remove all the obstacles which prevent God from blessing you!

⁶ Then people [SYN] everywhere will understand how God can save [MTY] *people*.

⁷ Although large groups of people came to John to be baptized {in order that he would baptize them}, *he knew that many of them were not sincere*. So he kept saying to them, "You *people are evil* [MET] *like poisonous snakes! I warn you that God will some day punish* [MTY] *everyone who sins*. And *do not think that you can escape from his punishing* [MTY] *you if you do not turn from your sinful behavior! did someone tell you that you can escape from his punishing* [MTY] *you if you do not*

turn from your sinful behavior?» [RHQ] ⁸ Do the deeds that are appropriate for people who have truly turned from their sinful behavior! *God promised to give Abraham many descendants.* In order to fulfill that promise, God does not need you! I tell you that he can change these stones to make them descendants of Abraham! So do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We(exc) are descendants of Abraham, so God will not punish us, even though we have sinned!' ⁹ *God is ready to punish you if you do not turn away from your sinful behavior, just like a man [MET] lays his axe at the roots of a fruit tree to chop it down and throw it into the fire if it does not produce good fruit [MET].*"

¹⁰ Then various ones in the crowd asked him, "What shall we(exc) do to escape God punishing us?" ¹¹ He answered them, "If any of you has two shirts, you should give one of them to someone who has no shirt. If any of you has plenty of food, you should give some to those who have no food." ¹² Some tax collectors came and asked to be baptized {asked him to baptize them}. They asked him, "Teacher, what shall we(exc) do to please God?" ¹³ He said to them, "Do not take from the people any more money than the Roman government tells you to take!" ¹⁴ Some soldiers asked him, "What about us? What should we(exc) do to please God?" He said to them, "Do not say to anyone, 'If you(sg) do not give me some money, I will hurt you,' and do not take people to court and falsely accuse them of doing something wrong! And be content with your wages."

¹⁵ People were expecting that the Messiah would come soon. Because of that, many of them wondered about John. Some of them asked him if he was the Messiah. ¹⁶ John replied to them all, "No, I am not. I used only water when I baptized you. But the Messiah will soon come! He is far greater than I am. He is so great that I am not worthy to be like his slave and untie his sandals [MET] like a slave would do! He will put his Holy Spirit within [MTY] you to truly change your lives, and he will judge others of you and punish you in the fire [MET] in hell. ¹⁷ He is like a man [MET] who wants to clear away the grain on the ground where it has been threshed {they have threshed it}. That man uses a huge fork to throw the grain into the air to separate the wheat from the chaff [MET], and then he cleans up the threshing area. Similarly, God will separate righteous people from the evil people, like a man who gathers the wheat into his storage area, and then he will burn those who are like chaff with a fire <that will never be put out/that will burn forever>."

¹⁸ John kept telling them many things to urge them to turn to God, as he told them the good message from God. ¹⁹ He also rebuked the ruler of the district, Herod Antipas. He rebuked him for marrying Herodias, his brother's wife, while his brother was still alive, and for doing many other evil things. ²⁰ But Herod had his soldiers put John in prison. That was another evil thing he did.

Luke 3:21-22

THEME: John baptized Jesus.

²¹ But before John was put in prison, when many people were being baptized {when he was baptizing many people}, after Jesus was baptized and {he baptized Jesus} and Jesus was praying, the sky opened. ²² Then the Holy Spirit, resembling a dove, descended upon Jesus. And God [SYN/EUP] spoke to Jesus from heaven, saying, "You(sg) are my Son, the one whom I love dearly. I am very pleased with you!"

Luke 3:23-38

THEME: The list of Jesus' ancestors.

²³ When Jesus began his work for God, he was about thirty years old. It was {People} thought that he was the son of Joseph. Joseph was the son of Heli. ²⁴ Heli was the son of Matthat. Matthat was the son of Levi. Levi was the son of Melchi. Melchi was the son of Jannai. Jannai was the son of Joseph. ²⁵ Joseph was the son of Mattathias. Mattathias was the son of Amos. Amos was the son of Nahum. Nahum was the son of Esli. Esli was the son of Naggai. ²⁶ Naggai was the son of Maath. Maath was the son of Mattathias. Mattathias was the son of Semein. Semein was the son of Josech. Josech was the son of Joda. ²⁷ Joda was the son of Joanan. Joanan was the son of Rhesa. Rhesa was the son of Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel was the son of Shelatiel. Shealtiel was the son of Neri. ²⁸ Neri was the son of Melchi. Melchi was the son of Addi. Addi was the son of Cosam. Cosam was the son of Elmadam. Elmadam was the son of Er. ²⁹ Er was the son of Joshua. Joshua was the son of Eliezer. Eliezer was the son of Jorim. Jorim was the son of Matthat. Matthat was the son of Levi. ³⁰ Levi was the son of Simeon. Simeon was the son of Judah. Judah was the son of Joseph. Joseph was the son of Jonam. Jonam was the son of Eliakim. ³¹ Eliakim was the son of Melea. Melea was the son of Menna. Menna was the son of Mattatha. Mattatha was the son of Nathan. Nathan was the son of David. ³² David was the son of Jesse. Jesse was the son of Obed. Obed was the son of Boaz. Boaz was the son of Sala. Sala was the son of Nahshon. ³³ Nahshon was the son of Amminadab. Amminadab was the son of Admin. Admin was the son of Arni. Arni was the son of Hezron. Hezron was the son of Perez. Perez was the son of Judah. ³⁴ Judah was the son of Jacob. Jacob was the son of Isaac. Isaac was the son of Abraham. Abraham was the son of Terah. Terah was the son of Nahor. ³⁵ Nahor was the son of Serug. Serug was the son of Reu. Reu was the son of Peleg. Peleg was the son of Eber. Eber was the son of Shelah. ³⁶ Shelah was the son of Cainan. Cainan was the son of Arphaxad. Arphaxad was the son of Shem. Shem was the son of Noah. Noah was the son of Lamech. ³⁷ Lamech was the son of Methuselah. Methuselah was the son of Enoch. Enoch was the son of Jared. Jared was the son of Mahalaleel. Mahalaleel was the son of Cainan. ³⁸ Cainan was the son of Enos. Enos was the son of Seth. Seth was the son of Adam. Adam was the man God created.

Luke 4:1-13

THEME: *Jesus refused to do the things that Satan suggested to him.*

4 ¹ As Jesus left the Jordan River valley, the Holy Spirit was completely controlling him. ² For forty days the Spirit led him around in the desolate area. During that time Jesus was being tempted by the devil {the devil was tempting him}, and Jesus did not eat anything. When that time ended, he was very hungry. ³ Then the devil said to Jesus, “Because you *claim that you* <have a relationship with God as a son has with his father [MET]/are the man who is both God and man>, *prove it* by telling these stones to become bread so that you can eat them!” ⁴ Jesus replied, “No, I will not change stones into bread, because it is written {Moses wrote} in the Scriptures that eating food sustains people physically, but it does not sustain them spiritually. They also need food for their spirits.” ⁵ Then the devil took him on top of a high mountain and showed him in an instant all the nations in the world. ⁶ Then he said to Jesus, “I will give you the authority to rule all these areas and will make you famous. I can do this because God has permitted me to control these areas, and I can allow anyone I desire to rule them!” ⁷ So if you worship me, I will let you rule them all!” ⁸ But Jesus replied, “No, I will not worship you, because it is written {the Psalmist wrote} in the Scriptures, ‘It is the Lord, your God, whom you must worship, and you must serve only him!’”

⁹ Then the devil took Jesus to Jerusalem. He set him on the highest part of the Temple and said to him, “Because you *claim that you* <have a relationship with God as a son has with his father [MET]/are the man who is both God and man>, *prove it* by jumping down from here. ¹⁰ You will not be hurt, because it is written {the Psalmist wrote} in the Scriptures, ‘God will command his angels to protect you(eg). ¹¹ They will lift you up in their hands when you are falling, so that you will not get hurt. You will not even strike your foot on a stone.’” ¹² But Jesus replied, “No, I will not do that, because it is written {Moses wrote} in the Scriptures: ‘Do not try to test the Lord your God to see if he will prevent something bad from happening to you when you do something foolish.’”

¹³ Then, after the devil had finished trying to tempt Jesus in many ways, he left him. He wanted to try to tempt him later at an appropriate time.

Luke 4:14-15

THEME: *Jesus began his work in Galilee district.*

¹⁴ As the Spirit empowered him, Jesus returned to Galilee district. People throughout all that region heard about what he was doing. ¹⁵ He taught people in their <synagogues/meeting places>. As a result, he was praised by everyone {everyone praised him}.

Luke 4:16-30

THEME: *The people of Jesus’ home town tried to kill him after he rebuked them for rejecting him.*

¹⁶ Then Jesus went to Nazareth, the town where he grew up. <On the Sabbath/On the Jewish rest day> he went <to the synagogue/to the Jewish meeting place>, as he usually did. He stood up to indicate that he wanted to read Scriptures to them. ¹⁷ A scroll containing the words that the prophet Isaiah had written was given to him {Someone gave to him a scroll containing the words that the prophet Isaiah had written}. He opened the scroll and found the place from which he wanted to read. He read these words:

¹⁸ The Spirit <of the Lord/of God> is upon me.

He has appointed [MTY] me to declare God’s good news to the poor.

He has sent me here to proclaim that God will deliver those whom Satan has captured, and he will enable me to enable those who are blind to see.

He will enable me to free people who have been oppressed {whom others have oppressed}.

¹⁹ And he sent me to declare that now is the time when <the Lord/God> will act favorably toward people.

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down to teach the people. Everyone in the synagogue was looking intently [MTY] at him. ²¹ He said to them, “Today as you have been hearing [MTY] me speak, I am beginning to fulfill this Scripture passage.” ²² At first everyone there spoke well about him, and they were amazed at the charming words that he spoke. But then some of them said, “<He is only Joseph’s son!/Isn’t he only Joseph’s son?> [RHQ] So <it is useless for us(exc) to listen to what he says!/why should we(exc) listen to what he says?> [RHQ]” ²³ He said to them, “Surely some of you will quote to me the proverb that says, ‘Doctor, heal yourself!’ What you will mean is, ‘People told us that you did miracles in Capernaum town, but we(exc) do not know if those reports are true. So do miracles here in your own home town, too!’” ²⁴ Then he said, “It is certainly true that people do not accept the message of a prophet when he speaks in his home town, just like you(pl) are not accepting my message now. ²⁵ But think about this: There were many widows in Israel during the time when the prophet Elijah lived. During that time, because of there being no rain [MTY] for three years and six months, there was a great famine throughout the country. ²⁶ But God did not send Elijah to help any of those Jewish widows. God sent him to Zarepath town near Sidon city, to help a non-Jewish widow. ²⁷ There were also many Jewish lepers in Israel during the time when the prophet Elisha lived. But Elisha did not heal any of them. He healed only Naaman, a non-Jewish man from Syria.” ²⁸ When all the people in the synagogue heard him say that, they were very angry, because they realized that he was inferring that he similarly would help non-Jewish people

instead of helping Jews.²⁹ So they all got up and shoved him out of the town. They took him to the top of the hill outside their town in order to throw him off the cliff *and kill him*.³⁰ But he *simply* walked through their midst and went away.

Luke 4:31-37

THEME: *Jesus expelled an evil spirit.*

³¹ One day he went with his disciples down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee *district*. On the next <Sabbath/Jewish day of rest> (OR, Each <Sabbath/Jewish day of rest>), he taught the people <in the synagogue/in the Jewish meeting place>. ³² They were continually amazed at what he was teaching, because *he spoke <with authority/as people speak who have the right to command others what to do>*. ³³ That day, (OR, On one of those Jewish days of rest,) there was a man in the synagogue who was controlled by an evil spirit. That man shouted very loudly, ³⁴ “Hey! Jesus, from Nazareth! *We(exc) evil spirits* have nothing in common with you, so <do not interfere with us now!/why should you interfere with us now?> [RHQ] <Do not destroy us now!/Have you come to destroy us now?> [RHQ] I know who you are. You are the Holy One *who has come from God!*” ³⁵ Jesus rebuked *the evil spirit*, saying, “Be quiet! And come out of *the man!*” The demon threw the man down on the ground in the midst of the people. But without harming the man, the demon left him. ³⁶ The people were all amazed. They said to each other, “<What he says to the demons *has great power!*/What kind of teaching is this?> [RHQ] He speaks to them like he knows that they must obey him, and as a result they leave people!” ³⁷ The people were telling everyone in *every village* in the surrounding region what Jesus *had done*.

Luke 4:38-41

THEME: *Jesus healed Simon’s mother-in-law and many others.*

³⁸ Jesus and his disciples left <the synagogue/the Jewish meeting place> and went into Simon’s house. Simon’s mother-in-law was sick and had a high fever. So *others in Simon’s family* (OR, *the disciples*) asked Jesus to *heal* her. ³⁹ So he bent over her and rebuked the fever. At once she became well! She got up and served them *some food*.

⁴⁰ When the sun was setting *that day*, and the restriction about not traveling <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day> was ended, many people [HYP] whose *friends or relatives* were sick or who had various diseases brought them to Jesus. He put his hands on them and healed *all* of them. ⁴¹ He also was *expelling demons* from many people. As the demons left those people, they shouted to Jesus, “You are <the Son of God/the one who is God and man>!” But he rebuked those demons and would not allow them to tell *people about him*, because they knew that he was the Messiah, and *for various reasons he did not want everyone to know that yet*.

Luke 4:42-44

THEME: *Jesus told them that he had to preach in other towns.*

⁴² Early the next morning Jesus left that house and went to an uninhabited place *to pray*. Many people searched for him, and when they found him they kept urging him not to leave them. ⁴³ But he said to them, “I must tell *people* in other towns also the good message about how God wants to rule [MET] their lives, because that is what I was sent {God sent me} to do.” ⁴⁴ So he kept preaching in <the synagogues/Jewish worship places> *in various towns* in Judea province.

Luke 5:1-11

THEME: *Jesus chose some fishermen to be his disciples.*

5 ¹ One day while many people were crowding around him to hear the message from God, Jesus was standing on the shore of Gennesaret Lake, *which is also called Lake Galilee*. ² He saw two *fishing* boats at the edge of the lake. The fishermen had gone out of the boats and were washing their *fishing* nets *on the shore*. One of the boats belonged to Simon. ³ Jesus got in that boat and asked Simon to push the boat a little bit away from the shore *so that he could speak to the crowd more easily*. Jesus sat in the boat and taught the people *who were on the shore*. ⁴ After he finished speaking to them, he said to Simon, “Push the boat out to where the water is deep. Then let your nets down *into the water* to catch *some fish!*” ⁵ Simon replied, “Master, *we(exc) worked hard all night but we did not catch any fish!* But because you(*sg*) tell me to do it, I will let down the nets.” ⁶ When Peter *and the men with him* had done that, they caught so many fish that their nets were breaking. ⁷ They motioned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. So they came and filled both the boats *with fish from the net*. The result was that the boats were so full that they began to sink. ⁸⁻⁹ Simon and all the men who were with him were amazed at how many fish they had taken. James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, who were Simon’s partners, were among those who were amazed. When Simon, *whose other name was Peter*, saw *the fish, feeling ashamed to be in the presence of someone who obviously had God’s power*, he prostrated himself before Jesus and said, “Lord, you should go away from me, because I am a sinful man!” ¹⁰ But Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid! *Up until now you(*sg*) have been gathering fish* [MET], but from now on you will gather people *to become my disciples*.” ¹¹ So after they brought the boats to the shore, they left their business [HYP] *in the hands of others* and went with Jesus.

Luke 5:12-16

THEME: *Jesus healed a leper and enabled him to associate with people again.*

¹² While Jesus was in one of the cities *there in the district of Galilee*, there was a man there who was very severely affected by leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he prostrated himself before him and, *wanting Jesus to heal him*, pleaded with him, “Lord/Sir, *please heal me, because you are able to heal me if you are willing to!*” ¹³ Then Jesus, *disregarding the religious law that forbade people to come close to lepers*, reached out his hand and touched the man. He said, “I am willing to *heal you*; and I heal you now!” Immediately the man *was healed*. He was no longer a leper [PRS]! ¹⁴ Then Jesus told him, “Make sure that you do not report *your healing immediately*. First, *find a local priest and show yourself to him so that he can examine you and verify that you no longer have leprosy*. After the priest tells *the local people*, they will know that *you have been healed, and you will be able to associate with them again*. Then go to the Temple in Jerusalem and take to the priests *the offering that Moses commanded that people who have been healed from leprosy should offer*.” ¹⁵ But many people heard the man’s report of what *Jesus had done*. The result was that large crowds came to Jesus to hear his *message* and to be healed of their sicknesses {so that he would heal their sicknesses}. ¹⁶ But he often would go away from them to the desolate area and pray.

Luke 5:17-26

THEME: *By healing a paralyzed man Jesus showed that he had authority to forgive sins, too.*

¹⁷ One day when Jesus was teaching, some men from the Pharisee sect were sitting there. Some of them were men who taught the Jewish laws. They had come from many [HYP] villages in Galilee district and also from Jerusalem and from other villages in Judea district. At that time while God was giving Jesus power to heal people, ¹⁸ several men brought on a sleeping pad a man who was paralyzed. They wanted to bring him into *the house* and lay him in front of Jesus. ¹⁹ But there was no way to do that because of the large crowd of people, so they went up *the steps* onto the roof. They tied ropes onto the sleeping pad and, after *removing some of the tiles on the roof*, they lowered the man *on the sleeping pad*. They lowered him through the opening into the midst of the crowd in front of Jesus. ²⁰ When Jesus perceived that they believed that *he could heal the man*, he said to him, “My friend, *I forgive your sins!*” ²¹ The men who taught the Jewish laws and the rest of the Pharisees began to question within themselves, “Who does this man *think he is, saying that?* He is insulting God! <Nobody can forgive sins!/What person can forgive sins?> [RHQ] Only God can do that!” ²² Jesus perceived what they were thinking. So he said to them, “<You should not question within yourselves *about what I said!*/Why do you question within yourselves *about what I said?*> [RHQ] Consider this: ²³ It would *not* be risky for someone to say to this man, ‘I forgive your sins,’ because no one could see whether or not his sins were really forgiven. But no one [RHQ], without having the power to heal, would say to him, ‘Get up and walk!’ because people could easily see whether he was healed or not. ²⁴ But I will do something now in order that you(pl) may know that God has authorized me, the one who came from heaven, to forgive the sins of people while I am on the earth, as well as to heal people.” Then he said to the man who was paralyzed, “To you I say, ‘Get up, pick up your sleeping pad, and go home!’” ²⁵ Immediately the man *was healed!* He got up in front of them. He picked up the *sleeping pad* on which he had been lying, and he went home, praising God. ²⁶ All the people *there* were amazed! They praised God and were completely awestruck. They kept saying, “We(*inc*) have seen wonderful things today!”

Luke 5:27-32

THEME: *Jesus answered criticism about associating with sinful people.*

²⁷ Then Jesus left *the town* and saw a man who collected taxes *for the Roman government*. His name was Levi. He was sitting in the booth where he collected the taxes. Jesus said to him, “Come with me *and become my disciple!*” ²⁸ So Levi left his work [HYP] and went with Jesus.

²⁹ Afterwards, Levi prepared a big feast in his own house *for Jesus and his disciples*. There was a large group of tax collectors and others eating together with them. ³⁰ The men who were there who taught the Jewish laws, ones who belonged to the Pharisee sect, complained to Jesus’ disciples, saying, “<It is disgusting that you are eating with tax collectors and others who we(*exc*) consider to be sinners!/*Why are you eating with tax collectors and others who we(*exc*) consider to be sinners?*>” [RHQ] ³¹ Then, to indicate that it was those who knew that they had sinned who were coming to him for help, Jesus said to them, “It is people who are sick who need a doctor, not those who are well [MET]. ³² Similarly, I did not come from heaven to invite those who think they are righteous to come to me. On the contrary, I came to invite those who know that they are sinners to turn from their sinful behavior and come to me.”

Luke 5:33-39

THEME: *Jesus explained that people could not follow both their old customs and his new teaching.*

³³ Those Jewish leaders said to Jesus, “The disciples of John *the Baptizer* often abstain from food to show that they want to please God, and the disciples of the Pharisees do that, too. But your disciples keep on eating and drinking! Why do not they fast like the others?” ³⁴ To show them that it was not appropriate for his disciples to be sad and abstain from food while he was still with them [MET], Jesus said to them, “When <the bridegroom/man who is getting married> is with his friends at the time of the wedding, you certainly do not make his friends abstain from food, do you [RHQ]? No, you do not do that.

³⁵ But some day he will be taken away {*his enemies* will take him away} from them. Then, at that time, his friends will abstain from food, *because they will be sad.*"

³⁶ Then Jesus told them two parables to show them that those who desire to live according to God's new message should not be forced to obey the old religious traditions like <fasting/abstaining from food>, and that those who know only the old traditions are not eager to accept new ones [MET]. He said, "People never tear a piece of cloth from a new garment and attach it to an old garment to mend it. If they did that, not only would they be ruining the new garment by tearing it, but the new piece of cloth would not match the old garment. ³⁷ Neither does anyone put freshly-squeezed grape juice into old skin bags to store it. If anyone did that, the grape juice would burst the skin bags because they would not stretch when the new wine ferments and expands. Then the skin bags would be ruined, and the wine would also be spilled. ³⁸ On the contrary, new wine must be put into new wineskins.

³⁹ Furthermore, those who have drunk only old wine are content with that. They do not want to drink the new wine, because they say, 'The old wine is [MET] good!'"

Luke 6:1-11

THEME: Jesus explained why he had authority to decide what his disciples should do on the Sabbath day.

6 ¹ One <Sabbath/Jewish day of rest>, while Jesus was walking through some grain fields with his disciples, they picked some of the heads of grain. They rubbed them in their hands to separate the grains from the husks, and ate the grain. The law of Moses permitted people to do that if they were hungry. ² Some Pharisees who were watching said to Jesus, "<You should not be doing on our rest day work that our laws forbid!/Why are you doing on our rest day work that our laws forbid?>" [RHQ] ³ Jesus wanted to show them that the record in Scriptures indicated that God permitted people to disobey certain religious laws when they needed food. So he replied, "It is written in the Scriptures what our revered ancestor, King David did when he and the men with him were hungry. You have read about that, <but you do not think about what it implies/so why do you not think about what it implies?>" [RHQ] ⁴ David entered God's big worship tent and asked for some food. The high priest gave him the bread that the priests had presented to God. It was permitted in one of Moses' laws that only the priests could eat that bread. David and his men were not priests, but David ate some, and gave some to the men who were with him. And God did not consider that what David did was wrong!" ⁵ Jesus also said to them, "I am the one who came from heaven, so I have the authority to determine what is right for my disciples to do on the day of rest!"

⁶ Another <Sabbath/Jewish day of rest> Jesus entered a <synagogue/Jewish meeting place> and taught the people. There was a man there whose right hand was shriveled. ⁷ The men who taught the Jewish laws and the Pharisees who were there watched Jesus, to see if he would heal the man <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day>. They did this so that, if he healed the man, they would accuse him of disobeying their laws by working on the day of rest. ⁸ But Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Come and stand here in front of everyone!" So the man got up and stood there. ⁹ Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you this: Do the laws that God gave Moses permit people to do what is good <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day>, or do they permit people to harm others? Do they permit us to save a person's life on our day of rest or to let him die [HYP] by refusing to help him?" ¹⁰ They refused to answer him. So after he looked around at them all, he said to the man, "Stretch out your withered hand!" The man did that, and his hand became all right again! ¹¹ But they were very angry, and they discussed with one another what they could do to get rid of Jesus.

Luke 6:12-16

THEME: Jesus chose twelve apostles.

¹² About that time Jesus went up into the hills to pray. He prayed to God all night. ¹³ The next day he summoned all his disciples to come near him. From them he chose twelve men, whom he called apostles. ¹⁴ They were Simon, to whom he gave the new name, Peter; Andrew, Peter's younger brother; James and his younger brother, John; Philip; Bartholomew; ¹⁵ Matthew, whose other name was Levi; Thomas; another James, the son of Alpheus; Simon, who belonged to the party that encouraged people to rebel against the Roman government; ¹⁶ Judas, the son of another James; and Judas Iscariot (OR, Judas from the town of Kerioth), the one who later <betrayed Jesus./enabled the Jewish leaders to seize Jesus.>

Luke 6:17-26

THEME: Jesus taught them which people God would be pleased with and which people he would be displeased with.

¹⁷ Jesus came down from the hills with his disciples and stood on a level area. There was a great crowd of his disciples there. There was also a large group of people who had come from Jerusalem and from many other places in Judea district, and from the coastal areas near Tyre and Sidon cities. ¹⁸ They came to hear Jesus talk to them and to be healed {and for him to heal them} from their diseases. He also healed those whom evil spirits had troubled. ¹⁹ Everyone in the crowd tried to touch him, because he was healing everyone by his/God's power. ²⁰ He looked [MTY] at his disciples and said, "God is pleased with you who know that you lack what he wants you to have; he will allow you to be the people whose lives he rules over. ²¹ God is pleased with you who sincerely desire to receive what [MTY] he wants you to have; he will give you what you need, until you are satisfied. God is pleased with you that grieve now because of sin. Later you will be joyful.

²²“God is pleased with you when *other* people hate you, when they will not let you join with them, when they insult you, when they say that you are evil because *you believe in me*, the one who came from heaven. ²³When that happens, rejoice! Jump up and down because you are so happy! *God will give you a great reward in heaven! When they do these things to you, it will prove that you are God’s servants.* (OR, *People have always treated God’s servants like that.*) Do not forget that their ancestors did the same things to the prophets *who served God faithfully!*”

²⁴“But there will be terrible punishment for you that are rich; the happiness you have received *from your riches* is all that you will get. ²⁵There will be terrible punishment for you who *think that you* have all that you need *from God* now; you will *realize* that you lack a lot of *what God* wants.

“There will be terrible punishment for you who are joyful now; you will *later* be very sad. ²⁶When most [HYP] people speak well about you, trouble is ahead for you; *it will prove that you are not God’s servants, because* your ancestors used to speak well about those who falsely *claimed that they were* prophets.

Luke 6:27-36

THEME: *Jesus taught how we should act toward those who are not kind to us.*

²⁷“But I say this to each of you who are listening *to what I say*: Love your enemies *as well as your friends!* Do good things for those who hate you! ²⁸Ask *God* to bless those who curse you! Pray for those who mistreat you! ²⁹If someone *insults one of you* by striking you on one of your cheeks, turn your face *so that he can strike* the other cheek *also*. If a *bandit* wants to take away your(sg) coat, let him also have your shirt. ³⁰Give something to everyone who asks you(sg) *for something*. If someone takes away things that belong to you(sg), do not ask him to return them. ³¹In whatever way you(pl) want others to act toward you, that is the way that **you** should act toward **them**.

³²“If you love *only* those who love you, do not *expect God* to praise you for *doing that* [RHQ], *because* even sinners love those who love them. ³³If you do good things *only* for those who do good things for you, do not *expect God* to reward you *for doing that* [RHQ], *because* even sinners do that. ³⁴If you lend *things or money only* to those who you expect will give something back to you, do not *expect that God* will reward you [RHQ] *for doing that!* Even sinners lend to other sinners, because they expect them to pay everything back. ³⁵Instead, love your enemies! Do good things for them! Lend to them, and do not expect them to pay anything back! *If you do that, God will give you a great reward.* And you will be *acting like* his children *should*. Remember that God is kind to people who are not grateful and to people who are wicked, *and he expects you to be like that too.* ³⁶Act mercifully toward others, just like your Father *in heaven acts mercifully toward you.*”

Luke 6:37-42

THEME: *Jesus taught that we should not decide how God should punish others.*

³⁷“Do not say how sinfully others have acted, and then *God* will not say how sinfully you have acted. Do not condemn others, and then *he* will not condemn you [DOU]. Forgive others *for the evil things that they have done to you*, and then *God* will forgive you. ³⁸Give *good things to others*, and then *God* will give *good things* to you. It will be *as though* [MET] *God is putting things in a basket* for you. He will give you a full amount, pressed down in the basket, which he will shake *so that he can put more in*, and it will spill over the sides! *Remember that* the way you act toward others will be the way that *God* will act toward you!”

³⁹“He also told *his disciples* this parable *to show them that they should be like him, and not be like the Jewish religious leaders*: “<You certainly would not *expect* a blind man to lead another blind man./Would you *expect* a blind man to lead another blind man?> [RHQ] If he tried to do *that*, <they would both probably fall into a hole!/wouldn’t they both probably fall into a hole?> [RHQ] *I am your teacher, and you disciples should be like me.* ⁴⁰A disciple should not *expect to be* greater than his teacher. But if a student is fully trained {if someone fully trains a student}, the student can become like his teacher [MET]. *So you should be content to be like me.*”

⁴¹“Why do you notice *someone else’s small faults?*/None of you should be concerned about *someone else’s small faults* [MET, RHQ]. *That would be like* noticing a speck in that person’s eye. But you should be concerned about *your own big faults*. *They are like* planks in your own eye, *which you do not notice.* ⁴²<You(sg) should not say, ‘Friend, let me take out that speck in your eye!’ when you do not notice the log in your own eye!/Why do you say, ‘Friend, let me take out that speck in your eye!’ when you do not notice the log in your own eye?> [RHQ] *If you do that, you are a hypocrite!* You should first *stop committing your own sins*. *That will be like* removing the plank from your own eye. Then, as a result, you will have the spiritual insight you need to help others get rid of the *faults that are like* specks in their eyes.

Luke 6:43-45

THEME: *Jesus taught that what people do reflects their inner thoughts.*

⁴³“*People are like trees* [MET]. Healthy trees do not bear bad fruit (OR, bear only good fruit), and unhealthy trees do not bear good fruit. ⁴⁴*Just like you* can tell if a tree is good or bad by looking at its fruit, *you can tell which people are good and which are bad by looking at the way they conduct their lives.* For example, *because thorn bushes cannot produce figs*, no one can pick figs from thorn bushes. And *since bramble bushes cannot produce grapes*, no one can *pick* grapes from bramble bushes. ⁴⁵*Similarly*, good people will conduct their lives in a good way because within themselves they think a lot

of good *things*, and evil people will live in an evil way because within themselves they think a lot of evil *things*. People speak *and act* according to all that they think in their <minds/inner beings>.

Luke 6:46-49

THEME: *Jesus taught why it is necessary to obey his teaching, not just listen to it.*

⁴⁶ “Because people should obey what their masters tell them, <it is disgraceful that you say that I am your master but you do not do what I tell you!/why do you say that I am your master but you do not do what I tell you?> [RHQ] ⁴⁷ Some people come to me, and hear my messages and obey them. I will tell you what they are like. ⁴⁸ They are like a man who dug deep *into the ground to prepare to build his house*. He made sure that the foundation was on solid ground. Then when there was a flood, the water tried to wash away the house. But the river could not shake the house, because it was built {he built it} on a solid *foundation*. ⁴⁹ But some people hear my messages but do not obey them. They are like a man who built a house on top of the ground without *digging* a foundation. When the river flooded, the house collapsed immediately and was completely ruined. *So it is important for you to obey what I teach you.*”

Luke 7:1-10

THEME: *Jesus healed a man without going to his house because the man’s master believed that Jesus could do that.*

7 ¹ After Jesus finished saying this to the people, he went *with his disciples* to Capernaum town. ² There was a Roman army officer there who had a slave whom he greatly esteemed. This slave was so sick that he was about to die. ³ When the officer heard about Jesus, he *summoned* some Jewish elders. He told them to go to Jesus and ask him to come and heal his slave. ⁴ When they came to where Jesus was, they earnestly asked Jesus *to return with them*. They said, “This officer deserves that you(sg) do this *for him*, ⁵ because he loves us *Jewish* people, and he *paid the money* to build a synagogue for us.” ⁶ So Jesus went with them. When he was near the *officer’s* house, the officer *decided that it was not necessary for Jesus to come to his house*. So he summoned some friends. He *told them to go to Jesus and tell him this*: “Lord/Sir, do not bother to come. *Because I am a non-Jew*, I am not worthy for you(sg), a *Jew*, to come into my house [MTY] *and associate with me*. ⁷ I did not feel worthy to come to you, *either*. But *please* command that my servant *be healed*, and he will become well! ⁸ *I believe this* because, as for me, there are people who have authority over me *and I obey them*. I also have soldiers under my *authority*. When I say to one of them, ‘Go!’ he goes. When I say to another ‘Come!’ he comes. When I say to my slave, ‘Do this!’ he does it. *And I believe that you speak with a similar kind of authority.*” ⁹ When *the officer’s friends arrived and told that to Jesus*, he marveled at what *the officer had said*. Then he turned and said to the crowd that was going with him, “I tell you, I have never before found anyone who trusted *in me like this non-Jewish man does*. No one from Israel, *where I would expect people to firmly believe in me*, has trusted in me like he has!” ¹⁰ When those men returned to the officer’s house, they found that the slave was well.

Luke 7:11-17

THEME: *Jesus caused a widow’s son to become alive again.*

¹¹ Soon after that, Jesus went to a town called Nain. His disciples and a large crowd of *other people* went with him. ¹² As they approached the town gate, the corpse of a young man who had just died was being carried out *on a stretcher* {people were carrying out *on a stretcher* the corpse of a young man who had just died}. His mother was a widow, and he was her only son. A large group of people from the town were accompanying them. ¹³ When the Lord saw her, he pitied her. He said to her, “Do not cry!” ¹⁴ Then, *ignoring the Jewish laws about not coming near a corpse*, he came close and touched the stretcher *on which the body was lying*. So the men carrying it stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” ¹⁵ The man sat up and began to talk! Jesus returned him to his mother *to care for her*. ¹⁶ Then everyone *there* was amazed/awestruck. They praised God, saying, “A great prophet has come among us!” They also said, “God has come to help his people!” ¹⁷ *Then they reported what Jesus had done* throughout all of Judea *district* and other nearby areas.

Luke 7:18-35

THEME: *Jesus taught about his ministry and the ministry of John the Baptizer.*

¹⁸ The disciples of John *the Baptizer went to the prison where John was and told him about those things*. ¹⁹ So *one day* John summoned two of *his disciples* and *told them to go to the Lord and ask him*: “Are you *the Messiah who the prophets prophesied would come*, or is it someone else that we should expect *to come*?” ²⁰ When those two men came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptizer sent us to ask you(sg) this: Are you *the Messiah that we are expecting God to send*, or shall we(exc) expect someone else?” ²¹ At that very time Jesus was healing many people of their diseases and *other* sicknesses, he was *casting out* evil spirits, and he was causing many blind people to be able to see. ²² So he answered those two men, “Go back and report to John what you have seen *me doing* and what you have heard *me telling people*. *I am enabling* blind people to see. *I am enabling* lame people to walk. *I am healing* people who have leprosy. *I am enabling* deaf people to hear. *I am causing* dead people to become alive again, *and I am telling God’s good message to poor people*. ²³ *Also tell John that God is pleased with those who do not stop believing in me because what I do is not what they expect the Messiah to do.*”

²⁴When the men whom John had sent left, Jesus began to talk to the crowd of people about John. He said to them, “*Think about what sort of person you went to see in the desolate area when you went there to see John* [RHQ]. *You did not go there to listen to a man who constantly changed the nature of his message* [MET], *like a reed that is blown back and forth by the wind* [RHQ]. ²⁵Then what kind of man did you go there to see [RHQ]? Was he [RHQ] a man who wore expensive clothes? No! *You know very well that people who wear beautiful clothes and live in luxury are in kings’ palaces, not in the desolate areas!* ²⁶Then what *kind of person* did you go to see? *Did you* [RHQ] *go there to see John because he was a prophet?* Yes! But I will tell you that *John is more important* than an *ordinary* prophet. ²⁷He is the one about whom *these words* that God said to the Messiah have been written {*the prophet Malachi wrote these words*} *in the Scriptures*: ‘Listen! I am going to send my messenger ahead of you[sg] [SYN]. He will prepare *people* for your coming.’

²⁸‘I tell you that from among all the people who have ever lived, *God considers that* no one is greater than John. However, *God considers* everyone who has let God rule their *lives* [MET] to be greater than *John, even if they are insignificant people.*”

²⁹When they heard *what Jesus said* (OR, *what John preached*), all the people, including tax collectors, *whom many people despised*, agreed that God’s way was right. By being baptized by John {By *letting* John baptize them}, *they had agreed that what God required people to do in order to be saved was right.* ³⁰But the Pharisees and the men who taught the *Jewish laws* were not baptized by John {did not *let* John baptize them} because they rejected what God wanted them to do.

³¹*Then Jesus also said*, “*◀Many of you people have heard what John and I have taught. I will illustrate what you are like./Do you know what many of you people who have heard what John and I have taught are like?▶* [RHQ] ³²You are like children who are *playing games* in an open area. *Some of them* are calling to *the others*, saying, “We(exc) played happy music for you on the flute, but you did not dance! Then we sang sad funeral songs for you, but you did not cry!” ³³*Similarly, you people are dissatisfied with both John the Baptizer and me!* When John came and *preached to you*, he did not eat *ordinary food* [SYN] or drink wine, *like most people do*. But you *rejected him*, saying, ‘A demon is controlling him!’ ³⁴In contrast, *I*, the one who came from heaven, eat *the same food* and drink *wine as others do*. But you *reject me*, saying, ‘Look! *This man* eats too much food and drinks too much wine, and he associates with tax collectors and *other sinners!*’ ³⁵But those who are *truly God’s children* [PRS] realize that *what John and I do is truly wise.*”

Luke 7:36-50

THEME: *Jesus told why he appreciated the sinful woman pouring perfume on his feet.*

³⁶*One day* one of the Pharisees *named Simon* invited Jesus to eat a meal with him. So Jesus went to the man’s house and reclined to eat. ³⁷There was a woman in that city *who many people knew had been* a prostitute [EUP]. She heard that Jesus was eating in the Pharisee’s house. So she went there, taking a stone jar that contained perfume. ³⁸*As they were reclining to eat*, the woman stood behind *Jesus, at his feet*. As she was crying *because she was sorry for her sins, her tears fell on Jesus’ feet*. Then she wiped his feet with her hair, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the perfume. ³⁹When the Pharisee who had invited *Jesus* saw that, he thought within himself, “*Prophets know about other people’s lives*, so if Jesus were a prophet, he would have known who this woman is who is touching him, and what kind of a person she is. He would have known that she is a prostitute! [EUP]” ⁴⁰Jesus said to him, “Simon, there is something I want to tell you[sg].” He replied, “Teacher, what is it?” ⁴¹Jesus replied, “Two people owed some money to a man who *earned money* by lending *it to others*. One owed him five hundred silver coins, and the other owed him fifty silver coins. ⁴²Neither of them was able to pay back *what he owed*, so the man *very kindly* said that they did not have to pay back anything. So, which of those two men will love that man more?” ⁴³Simon replied, “I think that the one who owed the most money and did not have to pay it back *will love him more.*” Jesus said to him, “That is correct.” ⁴⁴Then he turned toward the woman, and said to Simon, “*◀Think about what this woman has done!/Do you[sg] see what this woman has done?▶* [RHQ] When I entered your house, you *did not follow our custom of welcoming guests* by giving me any water to wash my feet, but this woman has wet my feet with her tears and then wiped them with her hair! ⁴⁵You did not *follow our custom of greeting* by kissing me, but since I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet! ⁴⁶You did not *follow our custom of welcoming guests* by anointing my head with *olive oil*, but she has anointed my feet with fragrant perfume. ⁴⁷So I will tell you that even though she has sinned very much, she has been forgiven {*I have forgiven her*}. *By what she has done she has shown that she loves me* very much. But a person who has *sinned* just a little bit, but whom *I have forgiven*, will love *me just a little bit.*” ⁴⁸Then he said to the woman, “You have been forgiven {*I have forgiven you*} for your sins.” ⁴⁹Then those who were eating with him said among themselves, “*◀This man must think that he is God!/Who does this man think that he is* [RHQ]”, saying that he can forgive *people* for their sins?” ⁵⁰But Jesus said to the woman, “Because you have trusted [PRS] *in me*, God has saved you *from the guilt of your sins*. May God give you inner peace as you go!”

Luke 8:1-3

THEME: *The list of women who helped Jesus.*

8 ¹Soon after that, Jesus went, along with his twelve *disciples*, through various cities and villages. As they went, he was telling people the good message about how God wants *◀to have complete control/to rule▶* [MET] *over their lives.* ²Some women from whom he had expelled evil spirits and healed of diseases also *went with him*. These included Mary, the woman from Magdala *village*, from whom *he had expelled* seven evil spirits; ³Joanna, the wife of Chuza, who was one of

King Herod Antipas' officials; Susanna; and many others. They were providing some of their own funds *to help Jesus and his disciples*.

Luke 8:4-8

THEME: *The story about four different kinds of soil.*

⁴ A great crowd of people came to Jesus from many towns. Then he told them this parable: ⁵ "A man went out *to his field* to sow *some seeds*. As he was scattering them over the soil, *some of the seeds* fell on the path. Then *people* walked on those seeds, and birds ate them. ⁶ *Some of the seeds* fell on rock *on which there was a thin layer of moist soil*. As soon as the seeds grew, the plants dried up because they had no moisture. ⁷ *Some of the seeds* fell on *ground that contained roots of thorny weeds*. The thorny weeds grew *together* with the young plants, and *they* crowded out *the plants*. ⁸ But some of the seeds fell on good soil and grew *well*. *Each seed later* produced a hundred *grains*." Then Jesus shouted to them, "If you want to understand [MTY] this, you must consider *carefully what I have just said!*"

Luke 8:9-15

THEME: *Jesus explained that the story represented different ways people respond to his teaching.*

⁹ Jesus' disciples *later* asked him about the meaning of the parable *he had just told*. ¹⁰ He said, "God is revealing to you what he did not reveal before, about *how he wants to rule* [MET] *over peoples' lives*. But when I am telling other people about *these things*, I tell them only in parables. The result will be *like a prophet predicted long ago*:

They will see *what I am doing*, but will not perceive *what it means*. They will hear *what I am saying*, but will not understand it.

¹¹ So this is the meaning of that parable: The seeds *represent* God's message. ¹² *Some people are like* the path on which some of *the seeds fell*. When these people hear God's message, the devil comes and causes them to forget what they have heard. As a result, they do not believe it and will not be saved {*God will not save them*}. ¹³ *Some people are like* the soil with rock *underneath*. When they hear *God's message*, they accept it joyfully. *But because it does not penetrate deeply* [MET] *into their inner beings*, they believe it for *only a short time*. *They are like the plants that did not have deep roots*. When difficult things happen to them, they stop believing *God's message*. ¹⁴ *Some people are like* the soil that had roots of thorny weeds in it. They are people who accept *God's message*, but later on they worry about things, and try to become rich, and enjoy *things that give them* a lot of pleasure. So they do not become *spiritually mature*. ¹⁵ But *some people are like* the good soil. They hear *God's message* and accept it. They *become* good, honest people, and they continue doing things *that please God* [MET].

Luke 8:16-18

THEME: *Jesus explained the need to make his truth clear to others.*

¹⁶ "After people light a lamp, they do not cover it with a basket or put it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a lampstand, so that those who enter the house can see *things from its light* [MET]. *Similarly, you must tell God's truth to others so that they can know what I can do for them*. ¹⁷ *God wants to make clear all of his truth* that was not evident previously. *He intends* that all of *the truth* that he had not revealed before be told openly {that *his people* openly tell *others all of the truth* that he has not revealed before}. ¹⁸ So listen *carefully to what I tell you*, because *God* will enable those who accept *my truth* to *understand even more*. But *God* will cause those who do not accept *my truth* to not understand even *the little* that they think they have *understood*."

Luke 8:19-21

THEME: *Jesus told them that some people are as dear to him as his own relatives.*

¹⁹ *One day Jesus'* mother and his *younger* brothers came to see him, but they could not get near him because there was a large crowd *around him in the house*. ²⁰ Someone told him, "Your mother and your *younger* brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you." ²¹ He replied, "Those who hear *God's message* and obey it are *as dear to me* [MET] as my mother and my brothers."

Luke 8:22-25

THEME: *Jesus calmed a storm.*

²² One day Jesus got into a boat with his disciples. He said to them, "Let's go *around* to the other side of the lake." So they started to go. ²³ As they were sailing, he fell asleep. A big windstorm came down on the lake. Soon the boat was filling with water, and they were in danger. ²⁴ They woke him up. They said *to him*, "Master! Master! *We (inc)* are going to drown!" He got up and rebuked the wind and told the waves to be calm. The wind stopped blowing and the waves calmed down. *The lake* became calm. ²⁵ He said to them, "«*I am disappointed that you did not trust me to help you!* Why did you not trust me *to help you?*»" [RHQ] They were afraid. They were also amazed. They said to each other, "«*What kind of man is this?* This

man is not like ordinary men!► [RHQ] He *not only commands people, but* when he commands the wind and the water, they also obey him!”

Luke 8:26-39

THEME: *Jesus expelled many demons from a man.*

²⁶ Jesus and his disciples arrived at the region near Gerasa, a town which was on the eastern side of Lake Galilee. ²⁷ There was a man in that region in whom demons lived. He was from the town of Gerasa. (OR, In that area there was a man from that town whom demons controlled.) For a long time he had not worn clothes. He did not live in a house. Instead, he lived in burial caves. ²⁸⁻²⁹ Many times demons attacked him. He was guarded {People tried to guard him} so that he would not injure others. Chains were fastened {They fastened chains} on his hands and shackles on his feet, but he would break the chains and shackles. Then he would be sent away by the demons {the demons would send him away} to the desolate area.

When Jesus stepped out of the boat onto the shore, the man saw him. He ran to Jesus and prostrated himself before him. Then Jesus commanded, “You evil spirit, come out of that man!” But it *did not leave immediately*. Instead, it caused the man to shout very loudly, “Jesus, Son of the great God in heaven, since we(inc) have nothing in common, leave me alone [RHQ]! I beg you, do not torture me now!” ³⁰ In order to expel the demon more easily, Jesus asked the demon, “What is your(sg) name?” He replied, “My name is Crowd/Mob.” He said that because many demons had entered that man. ³¹ The demons kept begging Jesus that he would not command them to go into the deep place where God punishes demons. ³² There was a large herd of pigs <grazing/rooting for food> on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus that he allow them to enter the pigs. So he did. ³³ The demons left the man and entered the pigs. Then the herd of pigs rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

³⁴ When the men who were taking care of the pigs saw what happened, they ran! They told people inside the town and outside the town what had happened. ³⁵ So people went out to see what had happened. When they came to where Jesus was, they saw that the man from whom Jesus had expelled the demons was sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to him. He had clothes on, and his mind was normal again. Then those people became afraid because they thought that he would destroy more of their property (OR, because they realized that he must be very powerful). ³⁶ The people who had seen what happened told those who had just arrived how Jesus had healed the man whom demons were controlling before. ³⁷ Then those people and many other people [HYP] from the area near Gerasa asked Jesus to leave their area. They were very afraid of what else Jesus would do to them. So Jesus and the disciples got into the boat to go back across the lake. ³⁸ The man from whom he had expelled the demons begged him saying, “Please, let me go with you!” But Jesus refused. Instead, he said to him, ³⁹ “No, go home and tell people how much God has done for you!” Then he sent him away. So he went away and told people throughout the town how much Jesus had done for him.

Luke 8:40-56

THEME: *Jesus caused a young girl to become alive again and healed a woman who had been bleeding for years.*

⁴⁰ When Jesus and the disciples returned to Capernaum, a crowd of people who had been waiting for him welcomed him. ⁴¹ Just then a man named Jairus, who was one of the leaders <of the synagogue/of the Jewish meeting place> there, came near and prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet. He pleaded with Jesus, “Please come to my house, ⁴² because my only daughter, who is about twelve years old, is dying!”

As Jesus went with him, many people crowded close to Jesus. ⁴³ Then a woman came near. She had been suffering from constant vaginal [EUP] bleeding for twelve years, but she could not be healed by anyone {no one could heal her}. ⁴⁴ She came behind Jesus and touched the edge of his robe in order to be healed. At once her bleeding stopped. ⁴⁵ Jesus said, “Who touched me?” When everyone said that they had not touched him, Peter said, “Lord, there is a great crowd of people around you(sg) and crowding against you, so any one of them might have touched you!” ⁴⁶ But Jesus said, “I know that someone deliberately touched me, because my power has healed someone who touched me.” ⁴⁷ When the woman realized that she could not prevent Jesus (OR, people) from knowing that she was healed, her body began to shake. She was afraid that because she had disobeyed the law that a woman with such a condition should not touch others, Jesus might scold her for doing that. She prostrated herself before him. As the other people were listening, she told why she had touched him and how she had been healed immediately. ⁴⁸ Jesus said to her, “Ma’am/My dear woman, because you believed [PRS] that I could heal you, I have healed you. Go from here, and may you experience God’s peace within you.”

⁴⁹ While he was still talking to her, a man from Jairus’ house came and said to him, “Your daughter has died. So <it is useless that you bother the teacher any longer by urging him to go to your house!/why do you bother the teacher any longer by urging him to go to your house?> [RHQ]” ⁵⁰ But when Jesus heard that, he said to Jairus, “Do not think that there is nothing more that can be done. Just believe that I can help her. If you(sg) do that, she will live again.” ⁵¹ When they arrived outside the house, he allowed only Peter, John, James, and the girl’s mother and father to go in the house with him. ⁵² All the people there were crying and beating their breasts to show that they were sad. But, knowing that he would cause the girl to live again, he said to them, “Stop crying! She is not dead! She is just sleeping [MET]!” ⁵³ The people laughed at him, because they knew that the girl was dead. ⁵⁴ But Jesus took hold of her hand and called to her, saying, “Child, get up!” ⁵⁵ At once her spirit returned to her body and she got up. Jesus told them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶ Her parents were amazed, but Jesus told them not to tell anyone else yet what had happened.

Luke 9:1-6

THEME: Jesus sent out his apostles to teach and heal people.

9 ¹ One day Jesus summoned his twelve *apostles*, and gave them power to expel all *kinds of demons* and to heal *people with diseases*. He gave them authority to do that. ² Before he sent them out to heal people and to tell people *what it meant to let God <rule/have complete control over> their lives*, ³ he said to them, “Do not take things for your journey. Do not take a walking stick or a *traveler’s bag* or food or money. Do not take <an extra shirt/extra clothes>. ⁴ Whenever you enter some house *to lodge there*, stay in that house until you leave that town. ⁵ *In towns* where the people do not welcome you, *you should not continue to stay there*. Just leave those towns. And as you leave, shake off the dust from your feet. *Do that* to warn them *that God will punish them for rejecting your message*.” ⁶ Then they left and traveled through many villages. Everywhere *they went*, they told people God’s good message and healed sick people.

Luke 9:7-11

THEME: Herod was uncertain about who was doing these miracles.

⁷ Herod *Antipas*, the ruler of *that district*, heard about the things that *Jesus and his disciples* were doing. *He had previously commanded his soldiers to execute John the Baptizer*, so now he was perplexed, because some people were saying that John had become alive again *and was doing those miracles*. ⁸ Others were saying that *the prophet Elijah* had appeared again. Others were saying that one of the *other former prophets* had become alive again *and was doing those miracles*. ⁹ But Herod said, “*It cannot be John who is doing these things, because I commanded my soldiers to cut off his head*. So who is *doing these miracles* that I am hearing about?” And he kept wanting to see *Jesus*.

¹⁰ When the apostles returned *from traveling to various towns*, they told Jesus the things that they had done. Then he took them and they went by themselves *by boat* to a town called Bethsaida. ¹¹ But when the crowds of *people who had been with Jesus* found out about that, they followed him *on land*. *When they got to where he was*, he welcomed them. He taught them about how God is going to some day <rule as king/have complete control over *people’s lives*>. He also healed the sick people.

Luke 9:12-17

THEME: Jesus fed over 5,000 people miraculously.

¹² Late in the afternoon the twelve *apostles* came to him and said, “This is a place where nobody lives, so dismiss the people so that they can go to the surrounding villages and other places where they can get some food and find places to stay.” ¹³ But he said to them, “*No, you yourselves* give them something to eat!” They replied, “We(*exc*) have only five small loaves and two *cooked fish*. Are you(*sg*) going to *give us the money* to go somewhere and buy food for all these people?” ¹⁴ There were about five thousand men *there*. He replied to the disciples, “*No, just* tell the people to sit down. Tell them to sit in groups, with about fifty people in each group.” ¹⁵ After they told the people that, they all sat down. ¹⁶ Then he took the five small loaves and the two fish. He looked up towards heaven and thanked *God for them*. Then he broke them *into pieces* and gave them to the disciples so that they would distribute them to the crowd. ¹⁷ *All the people in the crowd* ate until they all had enough to eat. Then *the disciples* collected twelve baskets full of the broken pieces that were left over!

Luke 9:18-27

THEME: After Peter expressed his belief that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus predicted his own death and resurrection.

¹⁸ One day Jesus was praying in a place where only the disciples were with him. He asked them, “The crowds of *people*, who do they say that I *really* am?” ¹⁹ They replied, “*Some people say that you are John the Baptizer, who has come back to life again*. Others say that you are *the prophet Elijah, who has returned from heaven as God promised*. Others say that you are one of the *other prophets* who lived long ago, who has come back to life again.” ²⁰ He asked them, “What about you(*pl*)? Who do **you** say that I am?” Peter replied, “You(*sg*) are the Messiah, who *has come from God*.” ²¹ Then Jesus warned them strongly not to tell that to anyone *yet*. ²² Then he said, “*Even though I am* the one who came from heaven, it is necessary that I suffer very much. It is also necessary that I be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the men who teach the *Jewish laws* {that the *Jewish* elders and the chief priests and the men who teach the *Jewish laws* will reject me}. It is necessary that I be killed {that *people* will kill me}. Then on the third day *after that*, I will become alive again.”

²³ Then he said to all of them, “If any one of *you* wants to be my disciple, you must not do *only* what you yourself desire to do. *Specifically*, you must be willing each day [MET] to let others hurt you and disgrace you. *That is like what is done to criminals who are forced to carry [MET] crosses to the place where they will be crucified. That is what anyone who wants to be my disciple must do*. ²⁴ You must do that, because those who try to save their lives *by denying that they belong to me when people want to kill them for believing in me* will not live *eternally*, but those who are killed because of being my *disciples* will live forever with me. ²⁵ People might get everything that *they want* in this world, but <they are really gaining nothing if they do not get eternal life by *becoming my disciples*!> are they really gaining anything if they do not get eternal life by *becoming my disciples*?> [RHQ] ²⁶ Those who reject my message *and* refuse to say that *they belong* to me, *I*, the one who came from heaven, will also refuse to say that *they belong* to me when I come back with the holy angels, and

have the glorious brightness that my Father has. ²⁷ But listen carefully! Some of you(*pl*) who are here now will see God ruling [MET] *in many powerful ways*. You will see it before you die!”

Luke 9:28-36

THEME: Jesus talked with Moses and Elijah.

²⁸ About a week after *Jesus* said those things, he took Peter, James, and *James' brother* John and led them up a mountain so that he could pray *there*. ²⁹ As he was praying, his face appeared very different to them. His clothes became as bright as lightning. ³⁰⁻³¹ Suddenly, two men appeared who had the brightness of *heaven* surrounding them. They were *prophets who had lived long ago*, Moses and Elijah. They started talking with Jesus about how he *would accomplish what God had planned when he died* [EUP] *very soon* in Jerusalem. ³² Peter and the other *disciples* who were with him were sound asleep. When they woke up, they saw *Jesus' brightness*. They also saw the two men standing with him. ³³ As *Moses and Elijah* were starting to leave Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is wonderful for us to be here! Allow us to make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah!” But he really did not realize what he was saying. ³⁴ As he was saying that, a *bright* cloud appeared and covered them. The disciples were afraid as the cloud surrounded them. ³⁵ *God* [MTY/EUP] spoke to them from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son. He is the one whom *I* have chosen to *do a great work for me*. So you must listen to him!” ³⁶ After *God* [MTY/EUP] finished saying that, *the three disciples* saw that only Jesus was there. They did not tell anyone what they had seen until much later.

Luke 9:37-43a

THEME: Jesus expelled a demon from a boy.

³⁷ The next day, after they had come down from the mountain, a large crowd of *people* met Jesus. ³⁸ Then a man from the crowd exclaimed, “Teacher, I plead with you, *do something to help* my son! He is my only child!” ³⁹ At various times an evil spirit suddenly seizes him and *causes* him to scream. The evil spirit shakes him violently and causes him to foam at the mouth. It does not leave until my child is completely exhausted. ⁴⁰ I pleaded with your disciples *who were here* for them to expel *the evil spirit*, but they were not able to do it!” ⁴¹ Jesus replied *by saying to everyone who had gathered there*, “*You who have seen how I help people* do not believe *that you can do anything!* What you *think* is perverted! How long must I be with you *before you are able to do what I do* [RHQ]? *How long must I* endure your *lack of believing?* Bring your(*sg*) son here *to me!*” ⁴² While they were bringing the boy to Jesus, the demon attacked the boy, threw him to the ground, and shook him severely. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit and healed the boy. Then he returned him to his father’s *care*. ⁴³ All the people *there* were amazed at the great *power* of God.

Luke 9:43b-45

THEME: Jesus predicted his arrest.

While they were all amazed at all the miracles *Jesus* was doing, he said to his disciples, ⁴⁴ “Think carefully [MTY] about what I am about to tell you: *Even though I am* the one who came from heaven, *I will soon* be handed over to the authorities {*someone* is about to enable [MTY] my enemies to seize me}.” ⁴⁵ But *the disciples* did not understand what he was saying; *God* prevented them from understanding it, so that they would not know *yet* what he meant. And they were afraid to ask him about *what he had said*.

Luke 9:46-48

THEME: Jesus told his disciples who is really great in God's sight.

⁴⁶ The disciples began to argue among themselves about which one of them would be the greatest *when Jesus became king*. ⁴⁷ But Jesus perceived what they were thinking. So he brought a young child to his side. ⁴⁸ He said to *the disciples*, “Those who, because they *love* me, (OR, because they want to behave like me) welcome a little child <*like this one/as I would*> [MTY], *God considers that* [MET] they are welcoming me. And those who welcome me, *God considers that* [MET] they are welcoming him, the one who sent me. Remember that those among you who think of themselves as being very unimportant will be the ones *whom God considers* to be great.”

Luke 9:49-50

THEME: Jesus told them not to forbid others from expelling demons.

⁴⁹ John replied to *Jesus*, “Master, we(*exc*) saw a man who was expelling demons, *claiming that he had* authority from you [MTY] to do that. So we told him to stop doing it, because he is not one of us *disciples*.” ⁵⁰ But Jesus said to him *and the other disciples*, “Do not tell him not to *do that!* Remember that those who are not opposing you are trying to *achieve the same goals that you are!*”

Luke 9:51-56

THEME: People in a Samaritan town refused to welcome Jesus.

⁵¹ When it was almost time for God to take him up to heaven, Jesus firmly resolved to go to Jerusalem. ⁵² He sent some messengers to go ahead of him, and they entered a village in Samaria district to prepare for him [SYN] to go there. ⁵³ But the Samaritans did not like the Jews because of their insisting that it was necessary to go to Jerusalem to worship God. So, because Jesus had firmly resolved to go to Jerusalem, they would not let him come to their village. ⁵⁴ When two of his disciples, James and John, heard about that, they said, "Lord, do you(sg) want us(exc) to pray that God will send fire down from heaven, as the prophet Elijah did long ago, and destroy those people?" ⁵⁵ But Jesus turned and rebuked them for saying that. ⁵⁶ So they went to a different village.

Luke 9:57-62

THEME: Jesus told three people what it would cost them if they became his disciples.

⁵⁷ As Jesus and the disciples were walking along the road, one man said to him, "I will go with you(sg) wherever you go!" ⁵⁸ In order that the man might know what he could expect if he went with him, Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes in the ground in which to live, and birds have nests, but even though I am the one who came from heaven, I do not have a home where I can sleep!" ⁵⁹ Jesus told another man, "Come with me!" But the man said, "Lord/Sir, let me go home first. After my father dies I will bury him, and then I will come with you." ⁶⁰ But Jesus said to him, "God considers that those who do not have eternal life are dead [MET]. Let those people do the work of burying people who die. As for you, go and tell people about how God wants <to rule/to have complete control over> people's lives!" ⁶¹ Someone else said, "Lord, I will come with you and be your disciple, but first let me go home to say good-bye to my relatives." ⁶² Jesus said to him, "Anyone who is plowing his field should not look back to see what he has done. He must look forward to what is ahead. Similarly, anyone who continues to be concerned about his family and other things he has left behind is not fit to serve me and tell others about how God wants to rule [MTY] people's lives."

Luke 10:1-12

THEME: Jesus instructed seventy-two other disciples before sending them out.

10 ¹ After that, the Lord Jesus appointed seventy-two other people. He prepared to send them out, two by two, to every town and village where he [SYN] intended to go. ² He said to them, "The people who are ready to receive your message are like a field of [MET] grain that is ready for people to harvest {to be harvested}. But there are not many people to bring them to God. So pray and ask the Lord God to send more workers who will gather people together and teach them my message, just like a landowner sends workers into his fields to gather the harvest. ³ Start going; but remember that I am sending you(pl) out to tell my message to people who will try to get rid of you. You will be like lambs among wolves. ⁴ Do not take along any money in a purse. Do not take a traveler's bag. Do not take extra sandals. Do not spend a lot of time greeting people along the way. ⁵ Whenever you enter a house to lodge there, first say to those people, 'May God give inner peace to you people [MTY] in this house!' ⁶ If people who live there are <desiring to have/worthy of receiving> God's peace, they will experience the inner peace that you are offering them. If people who live there are not desiring to have God's peace, you will experience God's inner peace, but they will not. ⁷ If they welcome you, stay in that same house until you leave that village. Do not move around from one house to another. Eat and drink whatever they provide for you. A worker deserves to get pay [MET] from the people for whom he works, so you deserve to receive food and a place to stay from the people to whom you go. ⁸ Whenever you enter a town and the people there welcome you, eat what is provided {what they provide} for you. ⁹ Heal the people there who are sick. Tell them, 'It is almost time for God to send his king to rule [MET] your lives.' ¹⁰ But if you enter a town whose people do not welcome you, go into its main streets and say, ¹¹ 'Because you have refused to hear our message, we(exc) will not only leave, we will also shake off the dust of your town that clings to our sandals, to warn you that God will reject/punish you. But we want you to know that it is almost the time when God will start to rule!' ¹² I will tell you this: On the [MTY] final day when God judges everyone, he will punish the wicked people [MTY] who long ago lived in Sodom, the city that he destroyed because its people were so wicked. But he will punish even more severely the people [MTY] of that town who refused to hear your message!"

Luke 10:13-16

THEME: Jesus warned the unbelievers in three towns.

¹³ "There will be terrible punishment for you people who live in [MTY] Chorazin and Bethsaida cities! I did great miracles in your cities to show God's power, but you did not turn from your sinful behavior. If the miracles that I performed in your cities had been done in Tyre and Sidon cities, the wicked people who lived there would have long ago shown that they were sorry for their sins by sitting on the ground wearing coarse cloth and putting ashes on their heads. ¹⁴ But they did not have the opportunity that you have, so when God punishes people, he will punish the wicked people who lived in Tyre and Sidon, but he will punish you more severely because you did not pay attention to my message! ¹⁵ I also have something to say to you people who live in Capernaum city. <Do not think that you will be honored {that God will honor you} in heaven! Do you think that you will be honored {that God will honor you} in heaven?> [RHQ] That will not happen! On the contrary, after you die, God will send you down to the place where sinful people will be punished forever!"

¹⁶ Jesus also said to the disciples, “God will consider that those who listen to your message are listening to me, and that those who reject your message are rejecting me. And he will consider that those who reject me are rejecting God, the one who sent me.”

Luke 10:17-24

THEME: Jesus commented on their ministry after the seventy-two returned.

¹⁷ The seventy-two people whom Jesus appointed went and did as he told them to. When they returned, they were very joyful. They said, “Lord, people did what we(exc) told them to do! But demons also obeyed us when by your(sg) authority [MTY] we commanded them to leave people!” ¹⁸ He replied, “When those demons were obeying you, because God had enabled you to defeat them, it was as though [MET] I saw Satan fall from heaven as suddenly and quickly as lightning strikes! ¹⁹ Listen! I have given you authority so that if you accidentally walk on poisonous snakes and scorpions, they will not hurt you. I have given you authority to defeat our enemy, Satan. Nothing shall hurt you. ²⁰ But although you can rejoice that evil spirits obey you, you should rejoice more that your names have been written {that God has written your names} in heaven, because you will be with God forever.”

²¹ At that time the Holy Spirit caused Jesus to be very happy. He said, “Father, you(sg) rule over everything in heaven and on the earth! Some people think that they are wise because they are well-educated. But I thank you that you have prevented them from knowing these things. Instead, you have revealed them to people who accept your truth as readily [MET] as little children do. Yes, Father, you have done that because it seemed good to you to do so.” ²² Jesus also said to the 72 disciples, “God, my Father, has revealed to me all the things that I need to know for my work. Only my Father knows who I really am. Furthermore, only I and those people to whom I wish to reveal him know what God my Father is like.”

²³ Then when his disciples were alone with him, he turned toward them and said, “God is pleased with you [SYN] who have seen the things that I have done! ²⁴ I want you to know that many prophets and kings who lived long ago desired to see the things that you are seeing me do, but those things did not happen then. They longed to hear the things that you have been hearing me say, but I did not reveal them then.”

Luke 10:25-37

THEME: Jesus taught that we must show our love to everyone, even ones we do not like to associate with.

²⁵ One day as Jesus was teaching people, a man who had studied carefully the laws that God gave Moses was there. He wanted to ask Jesus a difficult question. So he stood up and asked, “Teacher, what shall I do in order to live with God forever?” ²⁶ Jesus said to him, “You(sg) have read [RHQ] what Moses has written in the laws that God gave him. What did Moses write about that?” ²⁷ The man replied, “He wrote that we(inc) must love the Lord our God in our <inner beings/hearts>. We must show that by what we feel and by what we do and by what we think. He also wrote that we must love people that we come in contact with as much as we love ourselves.” ²⁸ Jesus replied, “You(sg) have answered your question correctly. If you do all that continually, you will live with God forever.”

²⁹ But the man wanted to defend the way he acted toward people that he came in contact with (OR, to defend why he had asked a question that Jesus answered so simply). So he said to Jesus, “Which people that I come in contact with should I love?” ³⁰ Jesus replied by telling him this illustration: “A Jewish man was once going down along the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Bandits attacked him. They took away most of the man’s clothes and everything else that he had, and they beat him until he was almost dead. Then they left him. ³¹ It happened that a Jewish priest was going along that road. When he saw that man, instead of helping him, he passed by on the other side of the road. ³² Similarly, a man who worked in the temple in Jerusalem came to that place and saw the man. But he also passed by on the other side of the road. ³³ Then a man from Samaria province came along that road to where the man was lying. People from Samaria despise Jews. But when he saw that man, he pitied him. ³⁴ He went close to him and put some olive oil and wine on the wounds to help heal them. He wound strips of cloth around the wounds. He placed the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next morning he gave two silver coins to the innkeeper and said, ‘Take care of this man. If you(sg) spend more than this amount to care for him, I will pay you back when I return.’” ³⁶ Then Jesus said, “Three people saw the man whom bandits attacked. Which one of them acted in a loving way toward that man?” ³⁷ The man who studied the Scriptures replied, “The one who acted mercifully toward him.” Jesus said to him, “You(sg) go and act like that toward everyone whom you can help!”

Luke 10:38-42

THEME: Jesus rebuked Martha for being too concerned about household chores.

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples continued to travel, they entered a village near Jerusalem. A woman whose name was Martha invited them to come to her house. ³⁹ Her younger sister, whose name was Mary, was sitting near Jesus. She was listening to what he was teaching. ⁴⁰ But Martha was very much concerned about preparing the meal. She went to Jesus and said, “Lord, <do you not care that my sister has left me to prepare everything by myself?/you do not seem to care that my sister has left me to prepare everything by myself!> [RHQ] Tell her that she should help me!” ⁴¹ But the Lord replied, “Martha, Martha, you(sg) are very worried about many things. ⁴² But only one thing is truly necessary, and that is, to listen to what

I am teaching. Mary has decided to *do that*, and that is better. *The blessing that she is receiving from doing that* will not be taken away from her {No one will take away from her *the blessing that she is receiving from doing that*}.”

Luke 11:1-13

THEME: *Jesus taught his disciples various things about prayer.*

11 ¹ One day Jesus was somewhere praying. When he finished *praying*, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us *what to say when we(exc) pray*, as John *the Baptizer* taught his disciples!” ² He said to them, “When you pray, say *things like this*: ‘Father, we want you(*sg*) [MTY] to be honored/revered. *We want people to let you(*sg*) [MTY, MET] rule over their lives.* ³ Give us(*exc*) each day the food [SYN] that we need. ⁴ Forgive us *for* the wrong things that we have done, because we forgive people for the wrong things that they do to us. Do not let us do wrong things when we are tempted {*someone or something* tempts us}.”

⁵ Then he said to them, “Suppose that one of you goes to the house of a friend at midnight. Suppose that you(*sg*) *stand outside and* call out to him, ‘My friend, please lend me three buns!’ ⁶ Another friend of mine who is traveling has just arrived *at my house*, but I have no food *ready* to give to him!’ ⁷ Suppose that he answers you from inside *the house*, ‘Do not bother me! The door has been locked {*We(exc)* have locked the door} and all my family are in bed. So I cannot get up and give you(*sg*) anything!’ ⁸ I will tell you that even if he does not *want* to get up and give you *any food*, to avoid being ashamed *for not helping you* because you are his friend (OR, if without being ashamed you continue asking him to do that), he certainly will get up and give you whatever you need. ⁹ So I tell you this: Keep asking *God for what you need*. If you do that, *he* will give it to you(*pl*). Confidently keep expecting *God to give you the things that you need*, and *he* will give them to you [MET]. *It will be like* looking for what you need and finding it. Keep on *praying urgently to God*. *Then God will answer you*. *It will be like* knocking on a door. And *God will open the way for you to get what you pray for*. ¹⁰ Remember that *God will give things* to everyone who continues to ask *him for them*. *He* will give things to whoever confidently keeps asking. *He* will open the way for people *to get the things that they keep urgently praying for*. ¹¹ If one of you had a son who asked you(*sg*) for a fish *to eat*, <you(*sg*) certainly would not give him a *poisonous* snake instead!/would you give him a *poisonous* snake instead?> [RHQ] ¹² If he asked you for an egg, <you(*sg*) certainly would not give him a scorpion!/would you give him a scorpion?> [RHQ] ¹³ Even though you people are evil, you know how to give good things to your children. So your Father in heaven will certainly *give good things* to those who ask him, *including giving the Holy Spirit, who is the best gift*.”

Luke 11:14-28

THEME: *Jesus taught people various things about demons.*

¹⁴ *One day there was a man there who, because a demon controlled him* [MTY], was unable to speak. After *Jesus expelled* the demon, the man *began to talk*. *Most* of the people *there* were amazed. ¹⁵ But some of them said, “It is Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, who enables *this man* to expel demons!” ¹⁶ Other *people there* asked him to perform a miracle *to prove that he had come* from God [MTY/EUP]. They wanted to trap him *into not being able to perform a miracle or into doing something ridiculous*. ¹⁷ But he knew what they were thinking. So he said to them, “If *the people in* one nation fight against each other, their nation will be destroyed {*they will destroy their nation*}. If *the people in* [MTY] one house are divided, they will cease to remain as one *family*. ¹⁸ *Similarly*, if Satan *and his demons* were fighting against each other, <his rule over them would *certainly* not last!/how would his rule over them last?> [RHQ] *I say this* because you are saying that I am expelling demons *by the power of the ruler of his own demons!* ¹⁹ Furthermore, if *it is true that Satan enables me* to expel demons, *is it also true that your disciples who expel demons do so by Satan’s power* [RHQ]? *No, that is not true*. So they will show that you *are not thinking logically*. ²⁰ But because it is by the power [MTY] of God *that I expel demons*, I am showing you *that the power of God to* [MET] rule *people’s lives* has come to you.”

²¹ Then, *to show that by expelling evil spirits he was making it clear that he was much more powerful than Satan, Jesus said* [MET], “When a strong man who has many weapons guards his own house, no one can steal the things in his house.

²² But when someone else who is stronger attacks that man and subdues him, he is able to take away the weapons in which the man trusted. Then he can take from that man’s house anything he *wants to*. ²³ *No one can be neutral*. Those who do not acknowledge *that the Holy Spirit enables me to expel demons* are opposing me, and those who do not gather *people to become my disciples* are causing *those people* to go away from me.”

²⁴ *Then Jesus said this*: “*Sometimes when* an evil spirit leaves someone, it wanders around in desolate areas seeking *someone in whom it can rest*. If it does not find anyone, it says *to itself*, ‘I will return to the person in whom I used to live!’

²⁵ So it goes back and finds that *the Spirit of God is not in control of that person’s life*. *The person’s life is like* a house that has been {that someone has} swept clean and everything put {put everything} in order, *but a house that has no one living there*. ²⁶ Then *this evil spirit* goes and gets seven other spirits that are *even more evil* than it is. They *all enter that person and begin* living there. So, *although* that person’s condition *was bad* before, it became much worse.”

²⁷ When Jesus said that, a woman who was listening called out *to him*, “*God is pleased with the woman who gave birth to you(*sg*) and let you nurse at her breasts!*” ²⁸ But he replied, “*God is much more pleased with those who hear his message and obey it!*”

Luke 11:29-36

THEME: *Jesus rebuked the people for wanting more miracles.*

²⁹When the group of people around *Jesus* got larger, he said, “*Many of you people who have been observing my ministry are evil. You want me to perform a miracle to prove that I have come from God, but the only miracle that I will perform for you is one like happened to Jonah.*” ³⁰*After Jonah was inside a huge fish for three days, God performed a miracle to bring Jonah back to life again. Jonah went and testified about that to the people in Nineveh city. God will perform a similar miracle for me, the one who came from heaven. When you people have seen that miracle, you will believe my message.*

³¹*The queen from Sheba, far south of Israel, who lived long ago, traveled a long distance to hear Solomon speak many wise things. But now I, a man who is much greater and wiser than Solomon, am here, but you have not listened to what I have told you. Therefore, at the time when God judges all people, the queen from Sheba will stand there, along with you people, and will condemn you.* ³²*The people who lived in Nineveh city turned from their sinful ways when Jonah preached to them. But now I, who am greater than Jonah, have come and preached to you, but you have not turned from your sinful ways. Therefore, at the time when God judges all people, the people who lived in Nineveh will stand there with you and condemn you.”*

³³*Then, to show them that they did not need more miracles, but that they needed only to understand better what he had already told them, he said to them [MET], “People who light a lamp do not then hide it, or put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on a lampstand so that those who enter the house can see things from its light. Similarly, I have not concealed God’s truth. I have revealed it to you.*” ³⁴*Your eyes [MET] are like a lamp for your body, because they enable you to see things. If your eyes are healthy, you are able to see everything well [MET]. Similarly, if you(sg) accept my teaching, you will be able to know all that God wants you to know. But if your eyes are bad, you are not able to see anything. It is like being in darkness [MET]. And similarly, if you(pl) do not accept what I teach, you will not be able to know all the things that God wants you to know.* ³⁵*Therefore, you(pl) do not need to see more miracles. You need to think carefully about what I have already told you, so that the things that you have heard from others do not cause you to remain in spiritual darkness [MET].* ³⁶*If you live completely according to God’s truth, you will be able to know everything that God wants you to know. It will be like being in a room with a lamp shining brightly, enabling you to see everything clearly.”*

Luke 11:37-54 (Mt. 23:1-36; Mk. 12:38-40)

THEME: *Jesus rebuked the Jewish leaders for only pretending to be good.*

³⁷While *Jesus* finished saying those things, a Pharisee invited him to eat a meal with him. So *Jesus* went to *his house* and ate with him. ³⁸The Pharisee was surprised when he saw that *Jesus* did not follow the Pharisees’ ritual by washing his hands before eating. *The Pharisees washed their hands in a certain way to be cleansed from anything that might have contaminated them. They were afraid that God might reject them if they had touched something unacceptable to God.*

³⁹The Lord *Jesus* said to him, “You Pharisees are concerned about things that are outside your bodies, not with what is in your <inner beings/hearts> [MET]. You wash the outside of cups and dishes before you eat because you think that doing that will make you acceptable to God, but within yourselves you are very greedy and wicked.” ⁴⁰You foolish people! *God* is concerned about things that are outside our bodies, but <he is certainly also concerned about our inner beings! isn’t he also concerned about our hearts?> [RHQ] ⁴¹Give money to those who are poor. Give according to what you know within your <inner beings/hearts> that you should give. Then you will be surprised to realize that you will be acceptable to *God* without having to perform all those rituals about washing.

⁴²“But there will be terrible punishment for you Pharisees! You give to *God* a tenth of all you produce, even the various herbs that you grow, but you do not remember that you must act justly toward others and love *God*! It is good to give a tenth of your income to *God*, but you ought to do these other things also!” ⁴³There will be terrible punishment for you Pharisees, because you like to sit in the best seats in our worship places so that people will think highly of you, and you like people to greet you respectfully in the market places. ⁴⁴There will be terrible punishment for you, because you are like ground where there is no marker to indicate that there is a grave underneath. People walk there, but they can not see what is rotten down below [MET]! Similarly, people who see you do not realize how polluted you are within yourselves.”

⁴⁵One of those who taught the Jewish laws replied, “Teacher, by saying this you(sg) are criticizing us also!” ⁴⁶*Jesus* said, “It will be terrible also for you who teach the Jewish laws! You require people to obey many rules that are difficult to obey [MET]. That is like making them carry heavy burdens on their backs. But you yourselves do not obey the laws that you require others to obey. (OR, you do not do anything to help others to obey the laws.)” ⁴⁷There will be terrible punishment for you! You decorate the tombs of the prophets whom your ancestors killed, but you do not live according to what the prophets taught. ⁴⁸So you are declaring that you approve of what your ancestors did. They killed the prophets, and you are not honoring them! You just decorate their tombs! ⁴⁹So *God*, who is very wise [PRS], said, ‘I will send prophets and apostles to you Jews. You will kill some of them and cause some of them to suffer greatly.’ ⁵⁰As a result, I will consider that many of you people who have observed my Son’s ministry will be guilty [MTY] of murder, as if you had killed all the prophets that other people have killed, from the time I created the world, ⁵¹starting from Adam’s son Cain killing his brother Abel and continuing until they killed the prophet Zechariah in the holy place between the altar and the temple.’ Yes, what I am saying is true [MTY]. *God* will punish you people who have observed my ministry whom he considers to be guilty [MTY] for killing all those prophets! ⁵²There will be terrible punishment for you men who teach the Jewish laws, because you have not let people know *God’s truth* [MET]! It is as though you are taking away a key to a house. You are not going into the house yourselves, and you are not letting other people enter it, either.”

⁵³ After Jesus finished saying those things, he left there. Then the men who taught the *Jewish* laws and the Pharisees began to act in a very hostile way toward him. They tried to make him say what he thought about many things. ⁵⁴ They kept waiting for him to say something *wrong* for which they could accuse him.

Luke 12:1-3

THEME: *Jesus warned the people not to be like the Pharisees.*

12 ¹ While they were doing that, many thousands of people gathered *around Jesus*. There were so many that they were stepping on each other. Then he said to his disciples, "Beware of *becoming* hypocrites *like* the Pharisees. Their *evil influence* [MET] *spreads to others like yeast spreads its influence in dough*. ² People will not be able to continue concealing the things that *they or other* people try to conceal now. *God will some day* cause the things that are hidden now to be known {*everyone* to know the things that they hide now}. ³ All the things that you say in the dark *secretly, some day* will be heard {people will hear them} in the daylight. The things you have whispered [SYN] among yourselves in your rooms will be proclaimed {*people* will proclaim them} publicly."

Luke 12:4-12

THEME: *Jesus told them not to be afraid to tell others of their faith in him.*

⁴ "My friends, listen *carefully!* Do not be afraid of people who *are able* to kill you, but after they kill you, there is nothing more that they can do *to hurt you!* ⁵ But I will warn you about the one that you should truly be afraid of. You should be afraid of *God*, because he not only has *the power* to cause people to die, he has the power to throw them into hell afterward! Yes, he is truly the one that you should be afraid of! ⁶ *Think about* the sparrows. *They have so little value* that you can [RHQ] buy five of them for only two small coins. But not one of them is ever forgotten by God {God never forgets one of them}! ⁷ You are more valuable *to God* than many sparrows. So do not be afraid of *what people can do to you!* *God* even knows how many hairs there are on each of your heads, *so that if you(sg) lose one hair, he knows about it. So nothing bad can happen to you without his knowing it.*

⁸ I want to tell you also that if people, *without being afraid, are willing* to tell others *that they are my disciples, I*, the one who came from heaven, will acknowledge before *God that they are my disciples. I will do that while* God's angels listen. ⁹ But if they *are* afraid to say in front of others that they are *my disciples, I will say while* God's angels listen, that they are not *my disciples*. ¹⁰ *I will tell you* also that *God is willing* to forgive people who say bad things about me, the one who came from heaven, but *he* will not forgive anyone who says evil things about what the Holy Spirit *does*. ¹¹ So when people ask you in Jewish worship houses and in the presence of rulers and other authorities *about your trusting in me*, do not worry about how you will answer them *when they accuse you*. Do not worry about what you should say, ¹² because the Holy Spirit will tell you at that very time what you should say."

Luke 12:13-21

THEME: *Jesus warned them about being greedy.*

¹³ Then one of the people in the crowd said to *Jesus*, "Teacher, tell my *older* brother to divide my father's property and give me *the part that belongs* to me!" ¹⁴ But Jesus replied to him, "Man, <no one appointed me in order that I would settle *matters when people are* disputing about property!/did anyone appoint me in order that I would settle *matters when people are* disputing about property?> [RHQ]" ¹⁵ Then he said to the whole crowd, "Guard yourselves very carefully, in order that you do not desire other people's things in any way! No one can make his life secure by *obtaining* many possessions."

¹⁶ Then he told them this illustration: "There was a certain rich man in whose fields abundant crops grew. ¹⁷ So he said to *himself*, 'I do not know what to do, because I do not have any place *big enough* to store all my crops!' ¹⁸ Then he said to himself, 'I *know* what I will do! I will tear down my grain bins and then build larger ones! Then I will store all my wheat and other goods in *the big new bins*. ¹⁹ Then I will say to myself [SYN], 'Now I have plenty of things stored up. *They will last* for many years. *So now* I will take life easy. I will eat and drink *all that I want* to and be happy *for a long time!*'" ²⁰ But God said to him, 'You foolish *man!* Tonight you will die! <Then all *the goods* you have saved up *for yourself* will belong to someone else, not to you!/Do you think that you *will benefit from* all that you have stored up for yourself?> [RHQ]"

²¹ Then Jesus ended this illustration by saying, "That is what will happen to those who store up goods just for themselves, but who do not value the things *that God considers* valuable."

Luke 12:22-34

THEME: *Jesus told his disciples not to worry about the things that they need.*

²² Then *Jesus* said to his disciples, "So I want to tell you this: Do not worry about *things you need* in order to live. Do not worry about *whether you will have enough food* to eat or *enough clothes* to wear. ²³ It is important to have sufficient food and clothing, but <the way you conduct your lives is more important./is not the way you conduct your lives more important?> [RHQ]" ²⁴ Think about the birds: They do not plant *seeds*, and they do not harvest *crops*. They do not have rooms or buildings in which to store crops. But God provides food for them. *And you* are certainly much more valuable

than birds. *So God will certainly provide what you need!*²⁵ <There is not a one of you who can add a little bit to how long he lives by worrying about it!/Is there any of you who can add a little bit to how long he lives by worrying about it?> [RHQ]²⁶ That is a small thing to do. So since you cannot do that, <you certainly should not worry about other things that *you need to have in order to live!*/why do you worry about other things that *you need to have in order to live?*> [RHQ]²⁷ Think about the way that flowers grow *in the fields*. They do not work *to earn money*, and they do not make their own clothes. But I tell you that *even though King Solomon, who lived long ago, wore very beautiful clothes*, his clothes were not as beautiful as one of those *flowers*.²⁸ God makes the flowers beautiful, but they grow in the fields for only a short time. Then *they are cut at the same time that the other grass is cut*, and thrown into an oven *to be burned to make heat for baking bread*. *So they really are not worth very much. But you are very precious to God, and he will care for you much more than he cares for the grass by filling it with beautiful flowers*. So he will certainly provide clothes for you, *who live much longer than the grass*. Why [RHQ] do you trust him so little?²⁹ Do not always be concerned about having enough to eat and drink, and do not be worrying about those things.³⁰ The people who do not know God are always worried about such things. But your Father *in heaven* knows that you need those things, *so you should not worry about them*.³¹ Instead, be concerned about letting God completely direct *your life*. Then *he* will also give you enough of the things *you need*.

³²“*You who are my disciples are like a small flock of sheep, and I am like your shepherd*. So you should not be afraid. Your Father *in heaven* wants to let you rule with him *in heaven*.”³³ *So now sell the things that you own. Give the money that you get for those things to poor people. If you do that, it will be as though you are providing for yourselves purses that will not wear out, and God will give you a treasure in heaven that will always be safe. There, no thief can come near to steal it, and no termite can destroy it.*³⁴ Remember that *the things that you think are the most valuable are the things that you will be constantly concerned about*.

Luke 12:35-48

THEME: *Jesus told them that they should be ready for his return.*

³⁵“Be always ready *for doing God’s work* [MET], like *people* who have put on their work clothes and are ready, with their lamps burning all night.³⁶ Be *ready for me to return* [MET], like servants who are waiting for their master to return after being at a wedding feast *for several days*. They are *waiting to open the door for him and start working for him again* as soon as he arrives and knocks at the door.³⁷ If those servants are awake when he returns, *he will be very pleased with them*. I will tell you this: He will put on *the kind of clothes* that servants wear and tell them to sit down, and he will serve them a meal.³⁸ *Even if he comes between midnight and sunrise, if he finds that his servants are awake and ready for him, he will be very pleased with them.*³⁹ But you must also remember this: If owners of a house knew what time the thief was coming, they *would stay awake and would not allow the house to be broken into and their goods to be stolen {the thief to break into the house and steal their goods}*.⁴⁰ Similarly, you must be *ready for me to return*, because *I*, the one who came from heaven, will come *again* at a time when you do not expect *me to come*.”

⁴¹ Peter said, “Lord, are you (sg) speaking this illustration *only* for us or for everyone *else also?*”⁴² The Lord replied, “*I am saying it for you and for anyone else* [MET, RHQ] who is like a faithful and wise manager in his master’s house. His master appoints him to *supervise affairs in his house* and to give all the *other* servants their food at the proper time. *Then he leaves on a long trip*.⁴³ If the servant is doing that work when his master returns, *his master* will be very pleased with him.⁴⁴ I tell you this: His master will appoint him to supervise all of his affairs *permanently*.⁴⁵ But that servant might say to himself, ‘My master *has been away for a long time, so he probably will not return soon and find out what I am doing.*’ *Then he might start to beat the other servants, both male and female ones. He might also start to eat a lot of food and get drunk.*⁴⁶ *If he does that, and if his master returns on a day that he does not know about, at a time when the servant does not expect him, then his master will <cut him into two pieces/punish him severely> [HYP] and put him in the place where he puts all those who do not serve him faithfully.*⁴⁷ Every servant who knows what his master wants him to do but who does not get himself ready and does not do what his master desires will be beaten severely {*The master will beat severely every servant who knows what his master wants him to do but who does not get himself ready and does not do what his master desires*}.⁴⁸ But every *servant* who did not know *what his master wanted* him to do, and who did things for which he deserved to be punished, will be beaten lightly {*the master will beat lightly every servant who did not know what his master wanted him to do and did the things for which he deserved that his master would beat him*}. *God will treat his people similarly, because he expects a lot from those people whom he has allowed to understand a lot*. People who entrust things to *others’ care* expect those people *to care for those things* very well. Similarly, *God* expects a lot from those people whom he has allowed *to understand a lot*. Furthermore, he expects the most from people to whom he has given the most *ability*.”

Luke 12:49-53

THEME: *Jesus warned them that they would face opposition even within their own families.*

⁴⁹“I came to earth to cause *trials* [MET], *which will purify you as fire purifies metal* (OR, to cause divisions). I wish that the time when *you will be purified {when God will purify you}* (OR, when divisions will be caused {to cause divisions among people}) had already begun.⁵⁰ I must soon suffer [IDM] greatly. I am distressed, and I will continue to be distressed until my suffering is finished.⁵¹ Do you think that as a result of my coming to earth people will live together peacefully? No! I must tell you, *that is not what will happen! Instead, people will be divided*.⁵² Because some people in one house *will believe in me and some will not*, they will be divided. Three people in one house *who do not believe in me* will oppose two *who do believe*, or two *who do not believe in me* will oppose three *who do believe*.⁵³ A man will oppose his son, or a son will

oppose his father. A woman will oppose her daughter, or a woman will oppose her mother. A woman will oppose her daughter-in-law, or a woman will oppose her mother-in-law.”

Luke 12:54-59

THEME: *Jesus told the people that they needed to settle their relationship with God before it was too late.*

⁵⁴ He also said to the crowds, “*In this country*, when you see a *dark* cloud forming in the west, you immediately say ‘It is going to rain!’ and that is what happens. ⁵⁵ *In this region*, when the wind blows from the south, you say, ‘It is going to be a very hot day!’ and that is what happens. ⁵⁶ You hypocrites! By observing the clouds and the wind, you are able to discern what is happening regarding *the weather*. It is disgusting that you are not able to discern *what God is doing* at this present time [RHQ]!

⁵⁷ <Each of you ought to determine now what is the right thing for you to do, *while you still have time to do that!*/Why can not each of you determine what is the right *thing for you to do now while you still have time to do that?*> [RHQ] ⁵⁸ *If you do not do that, God will punish you* [MET]. *It will be like what happens when someone takes one of you to court, saying that you(sg) have done something very bad. You should try to settle things with him while you are still on the way to the court. If he forces you to go to the judge, the judge will decide that you are guilty and put you into the hands of the court officer. Then that officer will put you in prison. ⁵⁹ I tell you that if you go to prison, you will never get out, because you will never be able to pay every bit of what the judge says you owe* [MET]. *Similarly, you ought to settle accounts with God before you die, too.*”

Luke 13:1-5

THEME: *Jesus warned the people that God would punish them if they did not turn from their sinful lives.*

13 ¹ Some people who were *listening to Jesus* at that time told him about some people from Galilee *district who had gone to Jerusalem*. Pilate, the Roman governor, had *ordered soldiers to kill them* [MTY] while they were offering sacrifices *in the Temple there*. ² Jesus replied to them, “Do you think *that this happened to those people from Galilee because they were more sinful than all the other people from Galilee?* ³ I assure you, *that was not so!* But instead of *being concerned about them, you need to remember that God will similarly punish you eternally* if you do not turn from your sinful behavior. ⁴ Or, *consider the eighteen people who died when the tower at Siloam outside Jerusalem fell on them. Do you think that this happened to them because they were more sinful than all the other people who lived in Jerusalem?* ⁵ I assure you, *that was not so!* But instead, you *need to realize that God will similarly punish you eternally* if you do not turn from your sinful behavior!”

Luke 13:6-9

THEME: *Jesus warned that he would punish the Jews for not showing that they appreciated God’s blessings.*

⁶ Then Jesus told them this illustration *to show how God would treat the Jews, whom he continually blessed, but who did not do things that please him*: “A man planted a fig tree on his farmland. <Each year/Many times> he came to it looking for figs, but there were no figs. ⁷ Then he said to the gardener, ‘Look *here!* I have been looking for fruit on this fig tree every year for the past three years, but there have been no figs. Cut it down! <It is just using up the nutrients in the soil for nothing!/Why should it continue using up the *nutrients in the soil for nothing?*> [RHQ]’ ⁸ But the man replied to the owner, ‘Sir, leave it here for another year. I will dig around it and put manure around it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, we(*inc*) will allow it to keep growing. If it does not bear fruit next year, you(*sg*) can cut it down.’”

Luke 13:10-17

THEME: *Jesus told a synagogue leader that he was being hypocritical regarding working on the Sabbath.*

¹⁰ One <Sabbath/Jewish day of rest>, Jesus was teaching people in one of the Jewish meeting places. ¹¹ There was a woman there whom an evil spirit [MTY] had crippled for eighteen years. She was always bent over; she could not stand up straight. ¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her over to him. He said to her, “Woman, *I am freeing you(sg) from your illness!*” ¹³ He put his hands on her. Immediately she stood up straight, and she praised God! ¹⁴ But the man in charge <of the synagogue/of the meeting place> was angry because Jesus had healed her <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day>. *He considered that healing was doing work*. So he said to the people, “There are six days *each week* in which *our Jewish laws* permit people to work. *If you need healing, those are the days* to come <to the synagogue/to the meeting place> and be healed. Do not come on our Jewish day of rest!” ¹⁵ Then the Lord replied to him, “You(*sg*) and your fellow religious leaders are hypocrites! <On the Sabbath/On the our Jewish day of rest>, *just like on every other day*, <each of you unties his ox or donkey, and then leads it from the food trough to where it can drink water./does not each of you untie his ox or donkey, and then lead it from the food trough to where it can drink water?> [RHQ] *That is work, too!* ¹⁶ This woman *is more important than an animal; she is a Jew, descended from Abraham!* But Satan has *kept her* [MET] *crippled* for eighteen years, *as though* he had tied her *and not let her escape!* So <it is certainly right that she be freed {that I free her}, *even if this is a Sabbath day!*/was it not right that she be freed {that I free her}, *even if this is a Jewish rest day?*> [RHQ]” ¹⁷ After

he said that, all the people *there* who opposed him were ashamed. But all the *other* people *there* were happy about all the wonderful things he was doing.

Luke 13:18-21 (Mt. 13:31-33; Mk. 4:30-32)

THEME: *Jesus gave two illustrations about God's rule over people's lives.*

¹⁸ Then he said, “<I will tell you how *the number of people who let God rule [MET] their lives will increase.*/Do you know how *the number of people who let God rule [MET] their lives will increase?*> [RHQ] I will tell you what I can compare it to.

¹⁹ It is like a *tiny* mustard seed that a man planted in his field. It grew until it became *big, like* a tree. It was so *big that* birds built nests in its branches.”

²⁰ Then he said, “I will tell [RHQ] you something else, to illustrate how the people who let God rule [MET] *their lives can influence their society more and more.* ²¹ It is like a *little bit* of yeast that a woman mixed with about fifty pounds of flour. *That small amount of yeast made* the whole batch of dough swell up.”

Luke 13:22-30 (Mt. 7:13-14, 21-23)

THEME: *Jesus warns that not all people who think that they will go to heaven will go there.*

²² Jesus continued traveling, along *with the disciples*, through various towns and villages on the way to Jerusalem. As they went, he was teaching *the people*. ²³ Someone asked him, “Lord, will there be only a few people who are saved {whom God saves}?” He replied to them, “*There will not be many, because the way to heaven [MET] is like a narrow door.* ²⁴ *Therefore, try hard* to enter that narrow doorway, because I tell you that many people will try to enter *heaven by some other way*, but they will not be able to get in. ²⁵ *God is like* the owner of a house. *Some day* he will lock the door. Then *some of you* will begin to stand outside the door and knock. You will say, ‘Lord, open the door for us!’ But he will reply, ‘*No, I will not open it, because I do not know you, and I do not know where you are from!*’ ²⁶ Then you will say, ‘<*You must have forgotten!/Have you forgotten?*> [RHQ] We(*exc*) ate *meals* with you(*sg*), and you taught *people* in the streets of our *towns!*’ ²⁷ But he will say, ‘*I tell you again*, I do not know you, and I do not know where you are from. You *are* wicked people! Get away from here!’” ²⁸ Then Jesus continued by saying, “*From where God will send you*, you will see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the distance. All the prophets *who lived long ago will also be there*, in the kingdom where *God is ruling*. But you will be outside, crying and grinding your teeth *because you will have severe pain!*” ²⁹ Furthermore, many *non-Jewish* people will be *inside*. There will be ones who have come from *lands* to the north, east, south, and west. They will be feasting in <that place where God is ruling/God's kingdom>. ³⁰ Think about this: Some people whom others do not *consider* important *now*, *God will make* them very important *then*, and some people whom *others consider* very important *now*, *God will make* to be not important *then*.”

Luke 13:31-35 (Mt. 23:37-39)

THEME: *Jesus stated that it was necessary for him as a prophet to die in Jerusalem.*

³¹ At that very time, some Pharisees came and said to Jesus, “Leave this area, because *the ruler* Herod *Antipas* wants to kill you(*sg*)!” ³² He replied to them, “Herod is [MET] *as cruel as a fox, but also as insignificant as a fox.* So I do not worry about him. But to show him that *no one can harm me until it is the time and place God has determined*, go tell him this *message from me*: ‘Listen! I am expelling demons and performing miracles today, and *I will continue doing* it for a short time. After that, I will finish my work. ³³ But I must continue my trip to *Jerusalem* during the coming days, because *they killed many other* prophets there, and *since I am also a prophet*, no other place is appropriate for people to kill me.”

³⁴ Then Jesus said, “O *people of [MTY] Jerusalem [APO]!* You killed the prophets *who lived long ago, and you killed others*, whom *God sent* to you, *by throwing stones at them*. Many times I wanted to gather you together to *protect you [SIM]* like a hen gathers her young chicks under her wings. But you did not want *me to do that.* ³⁵ So listen to this: Your city [MTY] (OR, your temple) is going to be abandoned (OR, God will no longer protect it). I will [MTY] also tell you this: I *will enter your city only once more.* After that, you will not see me until the time when *I return and you say about me*, ‘God is truly pleased with this man who comes with God's authority [MTY]!’”

Luke 14:1-6

THEME: *Jesus told the Jewish leaders that they were being hypocritical about not helping people on the Sabbath.*

14 ¹ One <Jewish day of rest/Sabbath day>, Jesus went to eat [SYN] at the house of an important Pharisee. Some *men who studied the Jewish laws* and other Pharisees who were there were watching him carefully to see *if he would do something for which they could accuse him.* ² Unexpectedly, there was a man in front of Jesus whose arms and legs were swollen. ³ Jesus said to them, “Is it permitted in *our(inc)* Jewish laws to heal *someone* <on our Jewish rest day/on the Sabbath>, or not?” ⁴ *They knew that their laws permitted it, but they thought that healing was work, which they thought was wrong to do* <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day> (OR, *they knew that their laws permitted it, but they did not want to admit it*). So they did not reply. Then Jesus put his hands on the man and healed him. Then he told him to go *home.* ⁵ Then he said to the rest of them, “If you had a son or an ox that fell into a well on a <Sabbath/our day of rest>, would you

immediately work to pull him out, or would you(sg) let him stay there until the next day?"⁶ They knew that they would immediately work to pull him out, even on their day of rest, so they could not justly say that Jesus did wrong by healing the man on that day. So they said nothing to reply to Jesus.

Luke 14:7-11

THEME: Jesus taught that we should not try to make ourselves seem important.

⁷ Jesus noticed that those people who had been {whom the Pharisee had} invited to the meal chose to sit in the places where important people usually sit. Then he gave this advice to them: ⁸ "When one of you(sg) is invited by someone {someone invites one of you(sg)} to a wedding feast, do not sit in a place where important people sit. Perhaps the man giving the feast has invited a man more important than you(sg). ⁹ When that man comes, the man who invited both of you will come to you(sg) and say to you, 'Let this man take your seat!' Then you(sg) will have to take the most undesirable seat, and you will be ashamed. ¹⁰ Instead, when you are invited {someone invites one of you} to a feast, go and sit in the most undesirable seat. Then when the man who invited everyone comes, he will say to you(sg), 'Friend, sit in a better seat!' Then all the people who are eating with you(sg) will see that he is honoring you. ¹¹ Also, remember this: God will humble those who exalt themselves. And he will exalt those who humble themselves."

Luke 14:12-14

THEME: Jesus taught that we should share with others who cannot repay us.

¹² Jesus also said to the Pharisee who had invited him to the meal, "When you(sg) invite people to a midday or evening meal, do not invite your friends or your family or your other relatives or your rich neighbors. They can later invite you(sg) for a meal. In that way they will repay you. ¹³ Instead, when you(sg) give a feast, invite poor people, crippled people, lame people, or blind people. ¹⁴ They will be unable to repay you. But God will bless you! He will repay you at the time when he causes righteous people to become alive again."

Luke 14:15-24

THEME: Jesus taught that many Jews would reject God's invitation to come to him.

¹⁵ One of those who were eating with him heard him say that. He said to Jesus, "God has truly blessed us Jews who will eat with the Messiah when he starts to rule!" ¹⁶ But to show that many Jews whom God had invited would not accept God's invitation [MET], Jesus replied to him, "One time a man decided to prepare a large feast. He invited many people to come. ¹⁷ When it was the day for the feast, he sent his servant to tell those who had been {whom he had} invited, 'Come now because everything is ready!' ¹⁸ But when the servant did that, all of the people whom he had invited began to say why they did not want to come. The first man the servant went to said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go there and see it. Please ask your master to forgive me for not coming!' ¹⁹ Another person said, 'I have just bought five pair of oxen, and I must go to examine them. Please ask your master to forgive me for not coming!' ²⁰ Another person said, 'I have just been married. So I cannot come.' ²¹ So the servant returned to his master and reported what everyone had said. The owner of the house was angry because the reasons they gave for not coming were ridiculous. He said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and alleys of the city and find poor and crippled and blind and lame people, and bring them here into my house!' ²² After the servant went and did that, he came back and said, 'Sir, I have done what you(sg) told me to do, but there is still room for more people.' ²³ So his master said to him, 'Then go outside the city. Search for people along the highways. Search also along the narrow roads with hedges beside them where homeless people may be staying. Strongly urge the people in those places to come to my house. I want it to be full of people!' ²⁴ Then Jesus said, "I tell you(pl) this: Very few of the Jewish people will enjoy my feast, even though I invited them first to eat it with me when I become king."

Luke 14:25-33

THEME: Jesus warned that it would be difficult to be his disciple.

²⁵ Large groups of people were traveling with Jesus. He turned and said to them, ²⁶ "If anyone comes to me who loves his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters more than [HYP] he loves me, he cannot be my disciple. He must even love me more than he loves his own life! ²⁷ People who are ready to execute a prisoner make him carry his cross [MET] to the place where others will nail him on it. Only those who are willing to allow others to hurt them and disgrace them like that because of being my disciples, and who are willing to obey what I teach, can be my disciples. ²⁸ I will illustrate [MET]. If one of you desired to build a <tower/big house>, <you would surely first sit down and determine how much it would cost!/would you not first sit down and determine how much it would cost?> [RHQ] Then you would determine whether you had enough money to complete it. ²⁹ If you did not do that, if you laid the foundation and were not able to finish the rest of the tower, everyone who saw it would make fun of you. ³⁰ They would say, 'This man started to build a tower, but he was not able to finish it!' ³¹ Or, if a king decided to send his army to war against another king, <he would surely first sit down with those who advised him./would he not first sit down with those who advised him?> [RHQ] They would determine whether his army, which had only ten thousand soldiers, could defeat the other army, which had twenty thousand soldiers, and was about to attack his army. ³² If he decided that his army could not defeat that army, he would send messengers to the other king while the other army was still far away. He would tell the messengers to say to

that king, 'What things must I do to have peace with your country?'³³ So, similarly, if any one of you does not first decide that you(*sg*) are *willing* to give up all that you have, you cannot be my disciple."

Luke 14:34-35

THEME: Jesus warned about losing our usefulness to God.

³⁴ Jesus also said, "You are like [MET] salt, which is useful to *put on food*. But <salt certainly cannot be made {you certainly cannot make salt} to taste salty again if it stops tasting salty!/can salt be made {can you make salt} to taste salty again if it quits tasting salty?> [RHQ] ³⁵ If salt does not taste salty anymore, it is not good for the soil or even for the manure heap. People throw it away. The same thing will happen to you if you become useless to God. If you want to understand what I just said [IDM], you must consider *carefully* what you have heard!"

Luke 15:1-10

THEME: Jesus taught that God is pleased when people turn from their sinful behavior.

15 ¹ Many [HYP] tax collectors and *others whom people considered to be* habitual sinners kept coming to him to listen to him teach. ² The Pharisees and men who taught the *Jewish laws who were there* [SYN] began to grumble, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and he also *defiles himself by eating* with them!" ³ So Jesus told them this parable: ⁴ "Suppose that one of you had a hundred sheep. If one of them were lost, <you(*sg*) would certainly leave the ninety-nine sheep in the pastureland, and go and search for the one lost sheep until you found it./wouldn't you leave the ninety-nine sheep in the pastureland, and go and search for the one lost sheep until you found it?> [RHQ] ⁵ When you(*sg*) found it, you would lay it on your shoulders and be happy. ⁶ When you brought it home, you would call together your friends and neighbors and say to them, 'Be happy with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost!' ⁷ I tell you(*pl*) that similarly God will be very happy about each and every sinner who turns from doing evil. God does not *need* to be happy about ninety-nine people who *think that they are* [IRO] righteous and think that they do not need to turn from doing evil.

⁸ Or, suppose that a woman has ten *very valuable* silver coins. If she loses one of them, <she will certainly light a lamp and sweep the floor and search carefully until she finds it!/will not she light a lamp and sweep the floor and search carefully until she finds it?> [RHQ] ⁹ When she finds it, she will call together her friends and neighbors and say, 'Be happy with me, because I have found the coin that I lost!' ¹⁰ I tell you that similarly the angels will be happy about *even just* one sinner who turns from doing evil."

Luke 15:11-32

THEME: Jesus taught the Jewish leaders that they also ought to be glad when people turn from their sinful ways.

¹¹ Then he told them this parable to compare what the Pharisees and teachers of the Jewish law thought about those who turn from their sinful behavior with what God thinks about such people. He said, "A certain man had two sons. ¹² One day the younger son said to his father, 'Father, I do not want to wait until you(*sg*) die. Give me now the share of your property that belongs to me!' So the man divided his property between his two sons. ¹³ A few days later, the younger son *sold his share*. He gathered his money and other things together and went to a country far away. There he spent all his money foolishly in reckless/wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent all his money, there was a great famine throughout that country. And soon he did not have enough *food to eat*. ¹⁵ So he went to one of the landowners in that area and asked for work. The man sent him to work taking care of the pigs in his field. ¹⁶ Because he was very hungry, he would have been glad to eat the bean pods that the pigs ate. But no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ Finally he thought clearly about what he had done. He said to himself, 'All of my father's hired servants have plenty of food! They have more [SYN] than they can eat, but here I am dying because I do not have anything to eat [HYP]!' ¹⁸ So I will leave here and go back to my father. I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against God [MTY/EUP] and against you(*sg*). ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called {of you calling me} your son. Just hire me to be like one of the other hired servants.' ²⁰ So he left there and went back to his father's house. But while he was still some distance from the house, his father saw him. He pitied him. He ran to his son and embraced him and kissed him *on the cheek*. ²¹ His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against God [MTY/EUP] and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called {of you calling me} your son.' ²² But his father said to his servants, 'Go quickly and bring to me the best robe *in the house!* Then put it on my son. Put a ring on his finger to show that I am honoring him again as my son! Put sandals on his feet to show that I do not consider him as a slave!' ²³ Then bring the fat calf and kill it and cook it! We(*inc*) must eat and celebrate, ²⁴ because this is my son! It is as though [MET] he was dead and is alive again! It is as though he was lost and now has been found!' So they did that, and they all began to celebrate.

²⁵ While all that was happening, his older son was out *working* in the field. When he came near to the house, he heard people playing music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the servants and asked what was happening. ²⁷ The servant said to him, 'Your younger brother has come home! Your father has told us to kill the fat calf to celebrate because your brother has returned safe and healthy.' ²⁸ But the older brother was angry. He refused to enter the house. So his father came out and pleaded with him to come in. ²⁹ But he replied to his father, 'Listen to me! For many years I have worked for you like a slave. I always obeyed everything you told me to do. But you never even gave me a young goat, so that I could kill it and cook it and celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But this son of yours spent all the money he got from what you gave him. He spent it to pay for sleeping with prostitutes! Now he has returned home, but it is not fair that you have told your servants to kill the

fat calf *and cook it for him!* ³¹ But his father said to him, 'My son, you have always been with me, and all my property *that I did not give to your brother* has been yours. ³² *But it is as though* [MET] your brother was dead and is alive again! *It is as though* he was lost and now he has been found! So it is appropriate for us to be happy and celebrate!"

Luke 16:1-13

THEME: *Jesus taught that we should handle our money in ways that are pleasing to God.*

16 ¹ Jesus also said to his disciples, "Once there was a rich man who had a household manager. *One day* he was told {someone told him} that *the manager* was managing the rich man's money badly. ² So he summoned *the manager* and said to him, '◀It is terrible what they are saying about you(sg)!/Is it true what they are saying about you(sg) [RHQ]?▶ Give me a written account of *the funds* you have been managing, because you can no longer be my *household manager!*' ³ Then the manager said to himself, 'My master is going to dismiss me from my work, so ◀I do not know what to do./what shall I do [RHQ]?▶ I am not strong enough to *work by* digging ditches, and I am ashamed to beg *for money.*' ⁴ *Suddenly he had an idea.* 'I know what I will do, so that people will take me into their houses *and provide for me* after I am dismissed {after my master dismisses me} from my work!' ⁵ So *one by one* he summoned the people who owed his master money. He asked the first one, 'How much do you(sg) owe my master?' ⁶ The man replied, 'Eight hundred gallons of olive oil.' The manager said to him, 'Take your bill and sit down and quickly change it to 400 *gallons!*' ⁷ He said to another man, 'How much do you owe?' The man replied, 'A thousand bushels of wheat.' The manager said to him, 'Take your bill and change it to eight hundred *bushels!*' *He did similar things for the others who owed his master money.* ⁸ When his master *heard what the manager had done*, he admired the dishonest manager for the clever thing he had done. *The truth* is that the ungodly people in this world act more wisely toward other people than godly people [MET] act. ⁹ So I tell you(pl) this: Use the money that you have *here* on earth to help others so that they will become your friends. Then when *you die* and you cannot *take* any money with you, *your friends* will welcome you into a home *in heaven* that will last forever.

¹⁰ People who faithfully manage small *matters* will also faithfully manage important *matters*. People who are dishonest in *the way they handle* small *matters* will be dishonest *in the way they handle* important *matters*. ¹¹ So if you have not faithfully handled the money that *God has given you here* on earth, ◀he will certainly not allow you to possess the true *spiritual* riches *in heaven!*/would he allow you to possess the true *spiritual* riches *in heaven?*▶ [RHQ] ¹² And if you have not faithfully managed things that belong to other people, ◀God will certainly not allow you to receive *treasures in heaven* that would belong to you!/would God allow you to receive *treasures in heaven* that would belong to you?▶ [RHQ] ¹³ No servant is able to serve two *different* bosses *at the same time*. *If he tried to do that*, he would hate one of them and love the other one, or he would be loyal to one of them and despise the other one. *Similarly*, you cannot *devote your life* to worshipping God and *worshipping* money and material goods *at the same time.*"

Luke 16:14-18

THEME: *Jesus taught that God's laws are permanent.*

¹⁴ There were some Pharisees *there*. They loved to *acquire* money. When they heard Jesus say that, they ridiculed him. ¹⁵ But he said to them, "You try to make other people think that you are righteous, but God knows your ◀inner beings/hearts▶. So *he will reject you*. *Keep in mind* that many things that people think are important, God thinks are detestable.

¹⁶ The laws that *God gave Moses* and what the prophets [MTY] *wrote* were ◀*in effect/what you needed to obey*▶ until John *the Baptizer* came. Since then *I have been preaching* about how God wants to *rule people's lives in a new way*, and many people are *accepting that message* and very eagerly asking God to control *their lives*. *But that does not mean that God has abolished the laws that he established previously.* ¹⁷ *All of God's laws, even those that seem insignificant*, are more permanent than heaven and earth.

¹⁸ *For example, because God considers that a marriage lasts until either the husband or the wife dies, he considers that* any man who divorces his wife and marries another woman is committing adultery. He also *considers that* any man who marries a woman who has been divorced by her husband {whose husband has divorced her} is *also* committing adultery."

Luke 16:19-31

THEME: *Jesus warned what would happen to those who did not share their possessions with poor people.*

¹⁹ *Jesus also said* [MET], "Once there was a rich man who wore *expensive* purple and linen *garments*. He ate luxuriously every day. ²⁰ And every day a poor man whose name was Lazarus was laid {some people also laid a poor man whose name was Lazarus} at the gate of the rich man's *house*. Lazarus' body was covered with sores. ²¹ He was so *hungry that he wanted to eat the scraps of food* that fell from the table where the rich man *ate*. Furthermore, *to make things worse*, dogs came and licked his sores. ²² *Eventually* the poor man died. Then he was taken by the angels {the angels took him} to *start feasting* next to his *great ancestor* Abraham. The rich man also died, and his body was buried {some people buried his body}. ²³ In the place where dead people wait for *God to judge them*, he was suffering great pain. He looked up and saw Abraham far away, and he saw Lazarus sitting close to Abraham. ²⁴ So he shouted, 'Father Abraham, I am suffering very much in this fire! So *please* pity me, and send Lazarus *here* so that he can dip his finger in water *and touch* my tongue to

cool it!’²⁵ But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that while you(*sg*) were alive *on earth* you enjoyed *many* good things. But Lazarus was miserable. Now *it is fair that* he is happy here, and you are suffering.’²⁶ Besides that, there is a huge ravine between you(*sg*) and us. So those who want to go from here to where you(*sg*) are, are not able to. Furthermore, no one can cross from there to where we(*exc*) are.’²⁷ Then the rich man said, ‘If that is so, father *Abraham*, I ask you(*sg*) to send *Lazarus* to my father’s house.’²⁸ I have five brothers *who live there*. Tell him to warn them *to turn away from their sinful behavior so that* they do not also come to this place, where we(*exc*) suffer great pain!’²⁹ But Abraham replied, ‘No, I will not do that, because your brothers are able to go to the Jewish meeting places where the priests read what Moses and the prophets wrote. They should listen to what Moses and the prophets [MTY] wrote!’³⁰ But the rich man replied, ‘No, father Abraham, *that will not be enough!* But if someone from those who have died goes back to them *and warns them*, they will turn from their sinful behavior.’³¹ Abraham said to him, ‘No! If they do not listen to *what* [MTY] Moses and the prophets [MTY] wrote, even if someone would rise from among the dead *and go and warn them*, they would not be convinced {he could not convince them} *that they should turn from their sinful behavior.*”

Luke 17:1-4

THEME: *Jesus warned about God punishing those who cause others to sin.*

17¹ One day Jesus said to his disciples, “Things that will tempt *people* to sin are certain to happen, but it will be terrible for anyone who causes them to happen!² Suppose you caused one of these people who *do not believe in me very strongly* to sin. If a huge stone was fastened {someone fastened a huge stone} around your neck and you were thrown {and threw you} into the sea, *you would consider that a severe punishment, but God will punish you even more severely if you cause someone to sin!*³ Be careful *how you act*. If you *know about* a fellow believer who sins, you(*sg*) should rebuke him. If he says that he is sorry for having sinned *and asks you to forgive him*, forgive him.⁴ Even if he sins against you(*sg*) seven times in one day, if he comes to you each time and says, ‘I am sorry for what I did’, you must continue forgiving him.”

Luke 17:5-6

THEME: *Jesus taught them what big things they could accomplish if they had true faith.*

⁵ One day the apostles said to the Lord, “Help us to trust *in you* (OR, *in God*) more strongly!”⁶ The Lord replied, “Mustard seeds are very small, but in this area they grow and produce large [MET] plants. Similarly, if your faith grows until you truly believe that *God will do what you ask him to, you will be able to do anything*. You could even say to this mulberry tree, ‘Pull yourself out *with your roots* and plant yourself in the sea!’ and it would obey you!”

Luke 17:7-10

THEME: *Jesus taught that we should serve God faithfully without expecting to be thanked.*

⁷ Jesus also said, “Suppose that one of you had a servant who was plowing *your fields* or taking care of your sheep. After he comes into the house from the field, you(*sg*) would not say [RHQ], ‘Sit down and eat immediately!’⁸ Instead, you would say to him, ‘Put on your apron and prepare a meal for me! Then serve it to me so that I can eat and drink it! Afterwards you(*sg*) can eat and drink.’⁹ <You will not thank your servant for doing the work that he had been told {you had told him} to do!> [RHQ] Would you thank your servant because he did the work that he had been told {you had told him} to do?> [RHQ]¹⁰ Similarly, when you(*pl*) have done everything that *God* has told you to do, you should say, ‘We(*inc*) are not worthy of *God thanking us {being thanked}*. We are only God’s servants. We have only done the things that he told us to do.”

Luke 17:11-19

THEME: *Jesus healed ten lepers, but only a non-Jewish one thanked him.*

¹¹ As *Jesus and his disciples* were walking along the road to Jerusalem, they were going through *the region* between Samaria and Galilee districts.¹² As they entered one village, ten lepers came near the road. *Because lepers were not permitted to come near other people*, they stood at some distance¹³ and called out, “Jesus, Master, pity us *and heal us!*”¹⁴ When he saw them, he said *to them*, “Each of you should go and show yourself to a priest *near your home so that he can see if you are healed.*” As they were going *there*, they were healed.¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God loudly.¹⁶ He *came to Jesus*, prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet, and thanked him. This man was a Samaritan, *not a Jew*.¹⁷ Then Jesus said, “I healed ten lepers! <I am disappointed that the other nine did not come back!> [RHQ] Where are the other nine?> [RHQ]¹⁸ I am disappointed [RHQ] that this non-Jewish man was the only one who returned to thank God; none of the others came back to me!”¹⁹ Then he said to the man, “Get up and continue on your journey. *God [PRS] has saved you and healed you(*sg*) because you trusted in me.*”

Luke 17:20-21

THEME: *Jesus taught that God’s rule is within our lives.*

²⁰ One day Jesus was asked by *some Pharisees* [SYN] {*some Pharisees* [SYN] asked *Jesus*}, “When is God *going* to rule as king?” He replied, “God’s ruling [MET] is not something people will be able to see with their eyes.²¹ And people will not

be able to say, 'Look! He is *ruling* here!' Or 'He is *ruling* there!' because, *contrary to what you think*, God's ruling is within people's inner beings (OR, is already happening among you)."

Luke 17:22-37

THEME: *Jesus told his disciples that without warning he would return and judge people.*

²² Jesus said to his disciples, "There will be a time when you will want to see *me* [MTY], the one who came from heaven, *ruling powerfully*. But you will not see that. ²³ Some people will say to you, 'Look, *the Messiah* is over there!' or *they will say* 'Look, he is here!' When they say that, do not believe them. Do not follow them *to go see the Messiah*. ²⁴ Because when the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, *everyone can see it*. Similarly, [SIM] at the time [MTY] when *I*, the one who came from heaven, come back again, *everyone will see me*. ²⁵ But before that happens, I must suffer in many ways (OR, very much). And I will be rejected by people {people will reject me}, *even though they have observed me doing good for people*. ²⁶ But when *I*, the one who came from heaven, *come again*, people will be doing things just like people were doing at the time when [MTY] Noah lived. ²⁷ At that time people ate and drank *as usual*, and they got married *as usual*, up until the day when Noah *and his family* entered the big boat. But then the flood came and destroyed all those *who were not in the boat*. ²⁸ Similarly, when Lot lived in Sodom city, *people there* ate and drank *as usual*. They bought things and they sold things. They planted *crops* and they built *houses as usual*. ²⁹ But on the day that Lot *and his family* left Sodom, fire and *burning sulfur* came down from the sky and destroyed all those *who stayed in the city*. ³⁰ It will be similar when *I*, the one who came from heaven, return to earth. ³¹ On that day, those who are outside their houses, with all the things that they own inside *the houses*, must not go *inside* to take them away, *because there will not be enough time to do that*. Similarly, those who are working in a field must not turn back to *get anything*; *they must flee quickly*. ³² Remember Lot's wife! *Because she turned back and wanted to get some of her things from Sodom, she died immediately and became a pillar of salt*. ³³ Anyone who wants to hold onto his life *and his possessions* will not receive *eternal* life. But anyone who is *willing to die for my sake* will live *eternally*. ³⁴ I tell you this: On the night *when I return*, there will be two people *sleeping* in one bed. The one *who believes in me* will be taken {God will take the one *who believes in me*} *to heaven*, and the other one will be left *behind and punished* {and he will leave the other one *behind and punish him*}. ³⁵ Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left {God will take one and leave the other} *behind*.^a ³⁷ His disciples said to him, "Lord, *where will this happen?*" He replied to them, "Wherever there is an animal carcass, the vultures will gather to eat it [MET]. Similarly, *wherever there are people who are spiritually dead, God will punish them*."

Luke 18:1-8

THEME: *Jesus taught about continuing to believe that God will answer prayer.*

18 ¹ Jesus told his disciples a parable to teach them that they always ought to pray confidently and not be discouraged *if God does not immediately answer their prayers*. ² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who did not revere God, and did not care about people, either. ³ There was a widow in that city who kept coming to him, saying, 'Please decide what is just in the *dispute between me and the man who is opposing me in court!*' ⁴ For a long time the judge refused to *help her*. But later he said to himself, 'I do not revere God and I do not care about people, ⁵ but this widow keeps bothering me! So I will *judge her case and show* that she is right. *If I do not do that*, she will exhaust me by continually coming to me!" ⁶ Then the Lord Jesus said, "*Even though* the judge was not a righteous man, think carefully about what he said! ⁷ Similarly, <God will certainly show that *what you* have done has been right!/will God not show that *what you* have done has been right?> [RHQ] He will do this for you whom he has chosen. *He will do this for you* who pray earnestly to him night and day, asking him to *help you*. He may delay *helping you*. ⁸ But I tell you, *some day* he will show that what you did was right, and he will do it quickly. But when *I*, the one who came from heaven, return to earth, <there may not be *many people who will still be trusting that I will vindicate them* (OR, who will still be trusting in me)/will there be *many people who will still be trusting that I will vindicate them* (OR, who will still be trusting in me)?> [RHQ]"

Luke 18:9-14

THEME: *Jesus taught about not thinking that we are better than others in God's sight.*

⁹ Jesus also told a parable *to warn* people who mistakenly thought that they were doing things that made them acceptable to God. Besides, they also despised other people. ¹⁰ He said this: "Two men went up to the Temple *in Jerusalem* to pray. One was a Pharisee. The other was a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed silently, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men. *Some extort money from others*; some treat others unjustly; some commit adultery. *I do not do such things. And I am certainly not like this tax collector who cheats people!*' ¹² Our law says that *we(exc) should <fast/abstain from food> once a week, but I do more than that*. I fast twice a week! I give you ten percent of all that I earn!" ¹³ But the tax collector stood far *from the other people in the Temple courtyard because he felt very unworthy*. He would not even look up toward heaven. Instead, he beat on his chest *to show that he was sorry for his sin*. He said, 'God, I am a sinner; be merciful to me *and forgive me!*'" ¹⁴ Then Jesus said, "I tell you(pl) that as the tax collector went home, the record of his sins was erased {God erased the record of his sins}, *not that of the Pharisee. Remember this:* Those who exalt themselves will

^a Some Greek manuscripts add verse. 36, "Two men will be working in a field; God will take one and leave the other behind."

be humbled {God will humble all those who exalt themselves}, but those who humble themselves will be exalted {he will exalt those who humble themselves}.”

Luke 18:15-17

THEME: *Jesus taught about accepting God’s rule in our lives as easily as little children do.*

¹⁵ One day when many people were coming to Jesus, they were also bringing small children. They wanted him to put his hands on *the children and bless them*. When the disciples saw that, they rebuked *those who were bringing them*. ¹⁶ But Jesus called the children *to come to him*. He said, “Let the children come to me! Do not stop them! It is people who are *humble and trusting* like they are who can experience God ruling *their lives*.” ¹⁷ Note this: Those who do not *trustingly* allow God to direct *their lives*, as children do, will not enter the [MET] place where God rules.”

Luke 18:18-30 (Mt. 19:16-29; Mk. 10:17-30)

THEME: *Jesus taught that rich people do not easily let God rule their lives.*

¹⁸ A Jewish leader asked Jesus, “Good teacher, what shall I do in order to have eternal life?” ¹⁹ Jesus said to him, “Only God is good! No one else is good! <So you(sg) should consider carefully what you are *implying* by calling me good!/Do you realize that you are *implying* that I am God by calling me good?> [RHQ]

²⁰ *But to answer your question*, you(sg) know the commandments that God gave Moses. He commanded such things as ‘do not commit adultery, do not commit murder, do not steal, do not testify falsely about what you have seen or heard, honor your father and mother.’” ²¹ The man said, “I have obeyed **all those commandments** ever since I was young. So <there must be something else I have not done./is that enough?>” ²² When Jesus heard him say that, he replied to him, “There is one thing that you(sg) have not *done* yet. Sell all that you own. Then give *the money* to poor people. *The result will be that* you will have *spiritual* riches in heaven. Then come and be my disciple!” ²³ The man went away sad when he heard that, because he was very rich *and he did not want to give everything away*. ²⁴ Jesus looked at him *as the man left*, and he said, “It is very difficult for those who are wealthy *to decide* to let God rule [MET] their lives. ²⁵ *You would say* that it is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. It is *almost* as difficult [HYP] for rich people *to decide* to let God rule their lives.” ²⁶ *The Jews thought that God favored rich people, so they thought that if God did not save rich people he would not save others, either. So one of the disciples* who heard him say that replied, “If that is so, it seems that no one will be saved {that God will not save anyone} [RHQ]!” ²⁷ But he said, “It is impossible for people *to save themselves*. But God can save them, because God can do anything!” ²⁸ Then Peter said, “*You know that we(exc) have left everything* we had and have become your disciples [RHQ]. So what about us? (OR, *So will God accept/save us?*)” ²⁹ He said to them, “Keep this in mind: Those who have left *their homes, their wives, their brothers, their parents, their children, or any other family members, to tell others* about how God wants to rule [MET] *people’s lives*, ³⁰ will receive in this life many times as much as *they left*. And in the future age they will <be living eternally with God/have eternal life>.”

Luke 18:31-34 (Mt. 20:17-19; Mk. 10:32-34)

THEME: *Jesus again predicted his death and resurrection.*

³¹ Jesus took the twelve *disciples* to a place by themselves and said to them, “Listen carefully! We(*inc*) are *now* going up to Jerusalem. *While we are there*, everything that has been written by the prophets {that the prophets have written} about *me*, the one who came from heaven, will be fulfilled {will occur}. ³² I will be put {My *enemies* will put me} into the hands of non-Jews. *The non-Jews* will make fun of me and mistreat me and spit on me. ³³ They will whip me, and *then* they will kill me. But on the third day *after that* I will become alive again.” ³⁴ But *the disciples* did not understand any of those things that *he said*. They were prevented {Something prevented them} from understanding the meaning of what *he* was telling *them*.

Luke 18:35-43

THEME: *Jesus healed a blind man.*

³⁵ As *Jesus and his disciples* came near to Jericho city, a blind man was sitting beside the road. *He was begging for money*. ³⁶ When he heard the crowd of *people* passing by, he asked someone, “What is happening?” ³⁷ They told him, “Jesus, *the man* from Nazareth town, is passing by.” ³⁸ He shouted, “Jesus, *you who are Messiah* descended from King David, pity me!” ³⁹ Those who were *walking* at the front of *the crowd* scolded him *and* told him to be quiet. But he shouted more loudly, “You who are the *Messiah* descended from King David, pity me!” ⁴⁰ Jesus stopped and told *people* to bring the man to him. When *the blind man* came near, Jesus asked him, ⁴¹ “What do you(sg) want me to do for you?” He replied, “Lord, enable me to see *again!*” ⁴² Jesus said to him, “*Then see!* Because you have trusted [PRS] *in me*, I have healed you!” ⁴³ Immediately he was able to see. And he went with *Jesus*, praising God. And when all the people who were *going with him* saw it, they also praised God.

Luke 19:1-10

THEME: Zacchaeus changed his way of life after talking with Jesus.

19 ¹They entered Jericho and were going through the city. ²There was a man *there* named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector, who was rich. ³He tried to see Jesus, but he was very short and there was a big crowd of people *near Jesus*. So he was not able to see him. ⁴So he ran further ahead *along the road* that Jesus was walking on. He climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see Jesus. ⁵When Jesus got there, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down quickly, because *God wants me to go with you(sg)* to your house and stay there *tonight!*” ⁶So he came down quickly. *He took Jesus to his house* and welcomed him joyfully. ⁷The people *who saw Jesus go there* grumbled saying, “He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner!” ⁸Then Zacchaeus stood up *while they were eating* and said to the Lord Jesus, “Lord, I want you(sg) to know that I am going to give half of what I own to poor people. And as for the people whom I have cheated, I will pay them back four times the amount *I have gotten from them by cheating.*” ⁹Jesus said to him, “Today *God has forgiven [PRS] you and the other people in [MTY] this house*, because you(sg) also *have shown that you have trusted in God as your ancestor Abraham did.*” ¹⁰Remember this: *I, the one who came from heaven, came to seek and save people like you(sg) who have gone astray from God, just like a shepherd who searches for his lost sheep.*”

Luke 19:11-27 (Mt. 25:14-30)

THEME: Jesus taught about being willing to take risks in using what he has given us.

¹¹They were coming near to Jerusalem, and the people who were *going with Jesus* who heard him say these things thought that as soon as *he got to Jerusalem* he would become their king. ¹²So he told them this parable: “A prince prepared to go a distant country in order that *the Emperor* would make him a king. *He intended* to return later. ¹³*Before he left*, he summoned ten of his servants. He gave each of them a coin worth three months’ wages. He said to them, ‘Do business with these coins until I return!’ *Then he left.* ¹⁴But *many of his fellow-citizens* hated him. So they sent some messengers after him to tell *the Emperor*, ‘We(*exc*) do not want this man to be our king!’ ¹⁵But *the Emperor* made him king anyway. *Later the new king* returned. Then he commanded that the servants to whom he had given the coins should be summoned {that someone should summon the servants to whom he had given the coins}. He wanted to know how much they had gained by doing business with the coins. ¹⁶The first man came *to him* and said, ‘Sir, with your one coin I have earned ten more *coins!*’ ¹⁷He said to this man, ‘*You are a good servant! You have done very well!* Because you have *handled* faithfully a small amount of money, I will give you authority to rule ten cities.’ ¹⁸Then the second servant came and said, ‘Sir, with your one coin I have earned five more *coins!*’ ¹⁹He said to that servant similarly, ‘*Good! I will give you authority to rule five cities.*’ ²⁰Then another servant came. He said, ‘Sir, here is your coin. I wrapped it in a napkin and put it away, *so that nothing would happen to it.*’ ²¹I did that *because I was afraid of what you would do to me if the business failed.* I know you are a man who does not do foolish things with your money. You *even take from others money* that does not really belong to you, *like a farmer who harvests grain from another man’s field* where he did not *even* do the planting.’ ²²He said to that servant, ‘You wicked servant! I will condemn you by the very words [MTY] that you *have just now spoken!* <You know that I do not *do foolish things with my money.* Did you not know that I do not *do foolish things with my money?*> [RHQ] *You said that I even take from others money* that does not really *belong to me, like a farmer who harvests grain from another man’s field* where he did not *even* do the planting. ²³So <you should at least have given my money to money lenders! why did you not *at least* give my money to bankers?> [RHQ] Then *when I returned* I could have collected that amount plus the interest *it would have earned!*’ ²⁴Then *the king* said to those who were standing near, ‘Take the coin from him and give it to *the servant* who has ten coins!’ ²⁵They protested, ‘But Sir, he already has ten *coins!*’ ²⁶*But the king said*, ‘I tell you this: To the people who *use well what they have received*, more will be given {I will give more}. But from the people who *do not use well what they have received*, even what they *already* have will be taken away {I will take away even what they already have}. ²⁷Now, *as for those enemies of mine* who did not want me to rule over them, bring them here and execute them while I am watching!’”

Luke 19:28-40 (Mt. 21:1-9; Mk. 11:1-10; Jn. 12:12-15)

THEME: Jesus entered Jerusalem humbly, but like a king.

²⁸After Jesus said those things, he *continued on the road* up to Jerusalem, going ahead of the disciples. ²⁹When they got near Bethphage and Bethany *villages*, near the hill that is called {that they call} Olive Tree Hill, ³⁰he said to two of *his* disciples, “Go to the village just ahead of you. As you *two* enter *it*, you will see a young animal that no one has ever ridden that has been {someone has} tied up. Untie it and bring it *to me.*” ³¹If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say *to him*, ‘The Lord needs it.’” ³²So *the two disciples* went *to the village* and found the *animal*, just like he had told them. ³³As they were untying it, its owners said to them, “Why are you two untying that young animal?” ³⁴They replied, “The Lord needs it.” *So the owners said that they could take it.* ³⁵The *two disciples* brought *the animal* to Jesus. They threw their cloaks on the animal’s back *for him to sit on* and helped Jesus get on it. ³⁶Then as he rode along, *others* spread their cloaks on the road *to honor him.* ³⁷As they came near *to Jerusalem*, on the road that descends from Olive Tree Hill, the whole crowd of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God loudly for all the great miracles that they had seen *Jesus do.* ³⁸They were saying things like, “May the Lord God bless our king who comes representing [MTY] him!” “May there be peace *between God* in heaven *and us his people!*” “May everyone praise God!” ³⁹Some of the Pharisees who were in the crowd said to him,

“Teacher, rebuke your disciples *for saying things like that!*”⁴⁰ He replied, “I tell you this: If these people would be silent, the stones themselves would shout *to praise me!*”

Luke 19:41-44

THEME: *Jesus prophesied that Jerusalem would be destroyed.*

⁴¹When *Jesus* came near to Jerusalem and saw the city, he cried about *its people*.⁴² He said, “*My disciples know what they need to do to have peace with God; I wish that even today the rest of you people knew it. But now you are unable to know [MTY] it.*”⁴³ I want you to know this: Soon *your enemies* will come and will set up a barricade around your *city*. They will surround *the city* and attack *it* on all sides.⁴⁴ They will *break through* the walls *and* destroy everything. They will smash you and your people/children. *When they finish destroying everything*, there will not be one stone left on top of another. *All this will happen* because you did not recognize the time when God sent his *Messiah* to save you!”

Luke 19:45-48

THEME: *Jesus expelled the merchants from the Temple courtyard and taught there.*

⁴⁵*Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the Temple courtyard.* He saw in that place the people who were selling things,⁴⁶ and he began to chase them out. He said to them, “It has been written {*A prophet wrote*} *in the Scriptures that God said, ‘I want my house to be a place where people pray’; but you bandits have made it a cave where you can hide!*”

⁴⁷Each day *during that week* *Jesus* was teaching people in the Temple courtyard. The chief priests and the men who taught the *Jewish* laws and *other Jewish* leaders tried to find a way to kill him.⁴⁸ But they did not find any way to do it, because all the people there listened eagerly to him *and would have resisted them if they had tried to hurt him.*

Luke 20:1-8

THEME: *Jesus refused to answer their question about his authority.*

20¹One day *during that week* *Jesus* was teaching the people in the Temple courtyard and telling them *God’s* good message. As he was doing that, the chief priests, the men who taught the *Jewish* laws, and *other Jewish* elders came to him.² They said to him, “Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things? Who authorized you to do things *like you did here yesterday?*”³ He replied, “I will also ask you a question. Tell me, ⁴where did John *the Baptizer* get *his authority* to baptize those who came to him? *Did he get it from God [MTY/EUP] or from people?*”⁵ They discussed this among themselves. They said, “*If we(inc) say, ‘It was from God [MTY/EUP],’ he will say to us, ‘Then <you should have believed John’s message!> why did you not believe what John preached?’ [RHQ]*”⁶ But if we say, ‘It was *from* people,’ the people *here* will *kill us* by throwing stones at us, because they *all* believe that John was a prophet *from God.*”⁷ So they replied, “*We(exc) do not know where John got his authority.*”⁸ Then *Jesus* said to them, “*Because you did not answer my question, I will not tell you who authorized me to do those things here yesterday.*”

Luke 20:9-18

THEME: *Jesus told a parable about how God would punish those who reject him.*

⁹Then *Jesus* told the people this parable *to illustrate what God would do to the Jews who rejected the former prophets and himself.* “A certain man planted a vineyard. He rented the vineyard to some men *to care for it and to give him some of the grapes in return.* Then he went to another country and stayed there several years.¹⁰ When it was *time* to harvest the grapes, he sent a servant to the men who were taking care of the vineyard. He expected that they would give him some of the grapes that the vineyard had produced. But *after the servant arrived*, they beat him and they did not give him any grapes. They *just* sent him away.¹¹ *Later, the owner* sent another servant. But they beat him and mistreated him *also.* They sent him away without giving him any grapes.¹² *Still later, the owner* sent another servant. That one they wounded and threw him out *of the vineyard.*¹³ So the owner of the vineyard said to himself, ‘*I do not know what to do! What shall I do?*’ [RHQ] *Then he had an idea. He said to himself, ‘I will send my son, whom I love very much. Perhaps they will respect him and give him my share of the grapes.’*¹⁴ *So he sent his son*, but when the men who were caring for the vineyard saw him *coming*, they said to each other, ‘*Here comes the man who will some day inherit the vineyard! Let’s kill him so that this vineyard will be ours!*’¹⁵ So they dragged him outside the vineyard and they killed him. So *<I will tell you what the owner of the vineyard will do to them!> do you know what the owner of the vineyard will do to them?*’ [RHQ]¹⁶ He will come and kill those men who were taking care of the vineyard. Then he will arrange for other people to take care of it.” When they heard that, they said, “*We would not do anything like those wicked men did!*”¹⁷ But *Jesus* looked directly at them and said, “You can say that, *but think about* the meaning of these words that are written {*which a prophet wrote*} [RHQ] *in the Scriptures,*

The men who were building a house rejected a certain stone. *But others put that same stone in its proper place, and it has become the most important stone in the building [MET].*

¹⁸ *That stone represents me, the Messiah, and those who reject me are like people who fall on this stone. Everyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces {This stone will break to pieces everyone who falls on it}, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."*

Luke 20:19-26

THEME: *Jesus foiled their attempts to trap him when they asked a question about paying taxes.*

¹⁹ The chief priests and the men who taught the *Jewish* laws realized that he was accusing them when he told the parable *about what those wicked men did*. So they immediately tried to find a way to seize [MTY] him, but *they did not seize him, because they were afraid of what the people there would do if they did that*. ²⁰ So they watched him carefully. They also hired <spies/secret agents> who pretended to be sincere. *But they really wanted to get him to say something for which they could accuse him*. They wanted to be able to turn him over to the authority of the governor of the province. *But they also knew that the Jews were disgusted with having to pay taxes to the government*. ²¹ So one of them asked him, "Teacher, we(exc) know that you(sg) speak and teach what is right. You tell the truth even if important people do not like it. You teach truthfully what God wants us to do. ²² So tell us what you think about this matter. Is it right that we pay taxes to the Roman government [MTY], or not?" ²³ But he knew that they were trying to trick him *to get him into trouble, either with the Jews, who hated to pay those taxes, or with the Roman government*. So he said to them, ²⁴ "Show me a Roman coin. Then tell me whose picture they have put on it. And tell me whose name is on it." They showed him a coin and said, "It has the picture and name of Caesar, the head of the Roman government." ²⁵ He said to them, "In that case, give to the government [MTY] what they require, and give to God what he requires." ²⁶ While the people were there, the spies were unable to find fault with him for what he said. They were amazed at his answer. So they said nothing.

Luke 20:27-40

THEME: *Jesus foiled their attempt to trap him with a question that they asked him about the resurrection.*

²⁷ Some Sadducees came to Jesus. They are a Jewish sect who do not believe that people will become alive again after they die. ²⁸ They wanted to ask Jesus a question *in order to discredit the idea that dead people will live again*. One of them said to him, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us Jews that if a man who has a wife but no children dies, his brother should marry the *dead man's* widow so that she can have a child by him. People will consider that the child is the descendant of the man who died, and in that way the dead man will have descendants." ²⁹ Well, there were seven boys in one family. The oldest one married a woman, but he and his wife did not bear any children. Later he died. ³⁰ The second brother followed this law and married the widow, but the same thing happened to him. ³¹ Then the third brother married her, but the same thing happened again. All seven brothers, one by one, married that woman, but they had no children, and one by one they died. ³² Afterwards, the woman died, too. ³³ Therefore, *if it is true that there will be a time when dead people will become alive again, whose wife do you think that woman will be then? <Keep in mind that she was married to all seven brothers!/It will be impossible to decide because she was married to all seven brothers!>* [RHQ] ³⁴ Jesus replied to them, "Men who live here in this world take wives, or are given wives by their parents {their parents choose wives for them}. ³⁵ But the men whom God considers worthy of *being in heaven after they become alive again* will not be married. ³⁶ You need to know also that they cannot die any more, because they will be immortal [SIM] like angels. The fact that God has caused them to be alive again will show that they are God's children. ³⁷ But as to people becoming alive again after they die, Moses wrote something about that. In the place where he wrote about the burning bush, he mentions the Lord as being the God whom Abraham worships and the God whom Isaac worships and the God whom Jacob worships. ³⁸ It is not dead people who worship God. It is living people who worship him. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob died long before Moses lived, but God said that they were still worshipping him, so we(inc) know their spirits were still alive! All people who are alive again after they die continue to live to honor him!"

³⁹ Some of the men who taught the *Jewish* laws replied, "Teacher, you(sg) have answered very well!" ⁴⁰ After that, they no longer dared to ask him any more questions *like that to try to trap him*.

Luke 20:41-44 (Mt. 22:41-45; Mk. 12:35-37)

THEME: *Jesus showed them that the Messiah must be greater than King David.*

⁴¹ Later he said to them, "<I will show you (OR, prove to you) that people are wrong who say that the Messiah is merely a descendant of King David!/Why do people say that the Messiah is merely a descendant of King David?> [RHQ] ⁴² Because David himself wrote in the book of Psalms about the Messiah,

God said to my Lord,

Sit here beside me on my right, where I will highly honor you(sg) [MTY].

⁴³ Sit here while I completely defeat your enemies.

⁴⁴ King David calls the Messiah 'my Lord'! So <the Messiah cannot be just someone descended from King David!/how can the Messiah be just someone descended from King David?> [RHQ] What I just said proves that he is much greater than David, isn't that right?"

Luke 20:45-47 (Mt. 23:1-36; Mk. 12:38-40)

THEME: *Jesus warned them not to show off like the teachers of the Jewish laws did.*

⁴⁵While all the *other* people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, ⁴⁶“Beware that *you do not act like* the men who teach our *Jewish* laws. They like to put on long robes and walk around to *make people think that they are very important*. They also like *people to greet them respectfully* in the market places. They like to *sit* in the most important places in the Jewish meeting places. At dinner parties *they like to sit* in the seats where the most honored people sit. ⁴⁷They swindle [MET] the houses *and property* of widows. Then they pretend they are good, as they pray *long prayers publicly*. God will *certainly* punish them very severely.”

Luke 21:1-4

THEME: *Jesus taught that God commends people who give to him sacrificially.*

21 ¹Jesus looked up *from where he was sitting* and saw rich people putting their gifts into the *offering* boxes in the *Temple courtyard*. ²He also saw a poor widow putting in two *small* copper coins. ³⁻⁴He said to *his disciples*, “The truth is that these rich people have a lot of money, *but* they gave *only a small part of it*. But this woman, who is very poor, has put in all the money that she had to pay for the things she needs! So *God considers that* [HYP] this poor widow has put more money into the box than all the others.”

Luke 21:5-19

THEME: *Jesus warned them about the terrible things that will happen before he returns.*

⁵Some of *Jesus’ disciples* talked about the Temple. *They commented about* the beautiful stones *used in building the Temple* and the other decorations that *people* had given, decorations *that were on the walls*. But he said, ⁶“*I want to tell you something about* these things that you are looking at. *They will be destroyed* {*Foreign invaders will destroy these buildings*} *completely*. Every stone *in these buildings* will be thrown down {*They will throw down every stone in these buildings*}. Not one stone will be left {*They will not leave one stone*} on top of another.”

⁷Later they asked him, “Teacher, when will that happen? What will happen to indicate that the things *you(sg) just told us* are about to happen?” ⁸He said, “*All that I will say is*, be sure that you are not deceived {*that they do not deceive you*} *about these things!* Many *people* will come and say <*that I sent them/that they have my authority*> [MTY]. They will say, ‘*I am the Messiah!*’ They will also say ‘*It is now the time when God will begin to rule!*’ Do not follow them to *become their disciples!*’ ⁹Also, whenever you hear about wars and riots, do not be terrified. Keep in mind that *God has said that* those things must happen. But *when they happen*, it will not mean that *the world* will end right away!”

¹⁰Then he said to them, “*Groups in various countries* will fight each other, and *various governments will also fight* against each other. ¹¹There will be *big* earthquakes, and in various places there will be famines and plagues. *People will see* things that will terrify them. There will also be unusual things happening in the sky. ¹²But before all these things happen, you will be persecuted and arrested {*people will persecute you and arrest you*} [MTY]. *Some of you* will be put {*They will put some of you*} *on trial* in the places where you gather to worship, and *you will be thrown* into prison. You will be put on trial {*They will put you on trial*} in front of high government authorities because you are my [MTY] *disciples*. ¹³That will be a time for you to tell *them about me*. ¹⁴So determine within yourselves not to be thinking before that happens what you will say to defend yourselves, ¹⁵because I will make you wise [HEN] so that you will *know* what to say. As a result, none of your enemies will be able to oppose what you say or <*refute you/show that you are wrong*>. ¹⁶*And there will also be other evil things that will happen:* Even your parents and brothers and *other* relatives and friends *who do not believe in me* will <*betray you/help your enemies to seize you*>. They will kill some of you. ¹⁷*In general*, most people will [HYP] hate you because *you believe in me* [MTY]. ¹⁸But your souls will be absolutely safe [IDM]. ¹⁹By enduring *all these things people will do to you*, you will preserve your *eternal* life [SYN].

Luke 21:20-24

THEME: *Jesus predicted that Jerusalem would be destroyed.*

²⁰“But when you see that Jerusalem has been surrounded by the armies of *your enemies*, you will know that it is the time for *this city* to be completely destroyed {*them to completely destroy this city*}. ²¹At that time those *of you* who are in Judea *district* must flee to the *higher* hills. Those who are in this city must leave *quickly*. Those who are in the nearby countryside must not go back into the city to *get any of their possessions before they flee*. ²²*You must obey what I tell you* because, in order that all the things that are written *in the Scriptures* will be fulfilled, *God* will very severely punish *the people who stay in this city*. ²³*I feel* very sorry for women *in this city* who will be pregnant, and women who will be nursing *their babies* in those days, *because it will be very difficult for them to run away!* *I feel sorry because* the people in this *land* will suffer greatly [MTY] *when God punishes them*. ²⁴Many of them will be killed {*Their enemies will kill many of them*} with swords. *Others will be captured* and taken {*They will capture others and take them*} to [HYP] *other* countries. Non-Jewish people will trample over Jerusalem until the time *that God has determined for them to rule the city* is ended.

Luke 21:25-28

THEME: *Jesus told them about the frightening things that will happen before he returns.*

²⁵ “There will also be strange things that will *happen* to the sun, the moon, and the stars. In *many* nations on the earth, *people* will be very frightened, and they will be anxious *when they hear* the ocean roaring and *see the huge* waves. ²⁶ People will faint because they will be afraid as they wait for what will happen in the world. *They will be afraid* because the powerful *objects* in the sky will be shaken {shake}. ²⁷ Then they will see *me*, the one who came from heaven, coming in a cloud powerfully and very gloriously. ²⁸ So when these things that *I have just now described* begin to happen, stand up *straight and* be brave, because it will be close to the time when *God* will free you *from all suffering*.”

Luke 21:29-33

THEME: *Jesus taught them how to know when his return was near.*

²⁹ *Then* he told them this parable: “Think about the fig tree, and all the *other* trees. ³⁰ As soon as you see their leaves beginning to sprout, you know that summer is near. ³¹ Similarly, when you see these things that *I have just described* happening, **you** will know that it is almost time for *God* to *truly* rule as king. ³² Keep this in mind: All the things that *I have just now described* will happen before all the people who have observed the things that I have done have died. ³³ *You can be certain that these things* that I have told *you* about will happen. That they will happen is more *certain* than that the earth and sky will continue to exist.

Luke 21:34-38

THEME: *Jesus taught them how to be ready for his return.*

³⁴ “But be on guard. Do not be getting drunk with carousing or let yourselves be distracted by worries *concerning* your lives [SYN] {or let worries *concerning* your lives [SYN] distract you}. *If you do wrong things like these, you may be suddenly surprised by my return* [MTY], like a trap *suddenly catches an animal in it*. ³⁵ *You need to know that my return will surprise* everyone all over the earth. ³⁶ So be ready at all times. Pray that you will be able to endure without being afraid of all these *difficult* things that will happen, so that you will then stand *confidently* before me, the one who came from heaven.”

³⁷ Each day *during that week* Jesus taught the people in the Temple *courtyard in Jerusalem*. But at night he *and his disciples* left the city and stayed on Olive Tree Hill. ³⁸ Early *each* morning many people came to the Temple *courtyard* to listen to him.

Luke 22:1-6

THEME: *Judas agreed to put Jesus into his enemies' hands.*

22 ¹ It was now almost time to celebrate the festival of Unleavened Bread, which *began with* the Passover feast. ² The chief priests and the men who taught the *Jewish* laws were seeking a way to kill Jesus. *But they wanted to do it secretly*, because they were afraid that if *they did not do it secretly*, the people *might riot*.

³ *Then even though* Judas, who was called *the man from Kerioth village*, was one of the twelve *disciples*, Satan entered him. ⁴ He went and conferred with the chief priests and the officers of the Temple guards. He discussed with them how he could enable them to seize *Jesus*. ⁵ They were pleased *that he wanted to do that*. They offered to give him money *for doing it*. ⁶ So he agreed, *and they gave him the money*. Then he tried to find an opportunity to enable them to seize *Jesus* when there was no crowd around him.

Luke 22:7-13

THEME: *Jesus arranged for his disciples to prepare the Passover meal.*

⁷ Then the day during the *first part of the week-long festival* of Unleavened Bread came, *the day* when the lambs for the Passover *celebration* had to be killed. ⁸ So Jesus said to Peter and John, “Go and prepare the meal for the Passover *celebration*.” ⁹ They replied to him, “Where do you(sg) want us to prepare it?” ¹⁰ He said to the *two* of them, “Listen carefully. When you *two* enter the city, a man who is carrying a *large* jar of water will meet you. Follow him. *When* he enters a *house*, ¹¹ tell the owner of the house, ‘*Our teacher says that we(exc) should ask you(sg) to please show us the room that he arranged with you* where he can eat the Passover *meal* with us, his disciples [RHQ].’ ¹² He will show you a large room that is on the upper *floor of the house*. It will be all set up *for a meal*. Prepare the meal for us there.” ¹³ So the *two disciples* went *into the city*. They found everything to be just like *Jesus* had told them. So they prepared *the meal* for the Passover *celebration there*.

Luke 22:14-23

THEME: *Jesus told them how they should remember his death for them.*

¹⁴When it was time [MTY] to eat the meal, Jesus came and sat down with the twelve apostles. ¹⁵He said to them, “I have greatly desired to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer and die. ¹⁶I want you to know that I will not eat the Passover meal again until all those whose lives God rules completely realize *what it represents*.” ¹⁷Then he took a cup of wine and thanked God for it. Then he said, “Take this, and each of you drink some of it. ¹⁸I want you to know that *from now on* I will not drink wine until God makes me king.” ¹⁹Then he took some bread and thanked God for it. He broke it *into pieces* and gave it to them to eat. He said, “This bread represents my body, which I am about to sacrifice for you. Keep on eating bread this way regularly to remember what I have done for you.” ²⁰Similarly, after they had eaten the meal, he took another cup of wine. He said, “The wine in [MTY] this cup represents my blood, which will soon flow from my body when I die. With this blood I will sign the new agreement that God is making with you. ²¹But note that the one [SYN] who will enable my enemies to seize me is eating right here with me! ²²It is certain that I, the one who came from heaven, will die, because that is what God has planned. But there will be terrible punishment for the man who will <betray me/enable my enemies to seize me>!” ²³Then they began to ask one another, “Which of us would do such a thing?”

Luke 22:24-30

THEME: *Jesus taught them that they should imitate him by serving each other humbly.*

²⁴The apostles began to argue among themselves, saying, “Which one of us will be the greatest when Jesus becomes king?” ²⁵So Jesus said to them, “The kings of the non-Jews enjoy showing that they are powerful. Yet they give themselves the title, ‘ones who help the people.’ ²⁶But you should not be like them! Instead, those who want God to consider them the greatest should act as though they were the youngest, since the youngest are expected to serve the older ones. Whoever is a leader should be one who serves the others. ²⁷Keep in mind who is the most important one [RHQ]. It is certainly the one who just sits at the table, not [RHQ] those who serve the meal. But I, your leader, have been an example for you by serving you while I have been among you.

²⁸“You are the ones who have stayed with me during all my troubles. ²⁹So now, just like my Father has appointed me to rule as a king, I am appointing you ³⁰so that you can sit and eat and rule [MET] with me when I become king. You will sit on thrones to judge the people of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Luke 22:31-34

THEME: *Jesus predicted that Peter would say that he did not know Jesus.*

³¹“Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has asked God to let him test you, and God has permitted him to do it. Satan wants to cause you to suffer distress (OR, distress you) so that you will not believe/trust in me any more/longer. He wants to shake you, just like a man shakes wheat in a sieve [MET]. ³²But I have prayed for you, Simon, that you will not completely stop believing in me. So when you(sg) restore your relationship with me, help your fellow apostles to trust in me more!” ³³Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you(sg) if they put you in prison, or even to die with you!” ³⁴Jesus replied, “Peter, I want you(sg) to know that this night, before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you do not know me!”

Luke 22:35-38

THEME: *Jesus warned his disciples that they would soon face opposition.*

³⁵Then Jesus asked all of them, “After I sent you out to other villages, and you went without taking any money or a traveling bag or extra sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?” They replied, “That’s right, we(exc) did not lack anything.” ³⁶Then, to show them that now many people would oppose them, (OR, to show them that they needed to be prepared to protect themselves,) he said to them, “Now things will be different. So whoever among you has some money should take it with him. Likewise, he should take a carrying bag. Whoever does not have a sword should sell his coat and buy a sword. ³⁷Because, I now tell you, something must happen to me to fulfill these words that a prophet wrote: ‘He was treated {They treated him} as though he were a criminal.’ Do not forget that everything that is {that they have} written about me in the Scriptures must be fulfilled.” ³⁸The disciples said, “Lord, look! We(exc) have two swords!” Realizing that they did not understand the meaning of what he said, he replied to them, “That is enough talk about swords!”

Luke 22:39-46

THEME: *Jesus prayed alone intensely.*

³⁹As Jesus left the city, he went, as he usually did, to Olive Tree Hill. His disciples went with him. ⁴⁰When he came to the place where he often spent the night, he said to them, “Pray that God will help you whenever something tempts you.” ⁴¹Then he went from them a distance of about thirty meters/yards. (OR, as far as someone can throw a stone.) He knelt and prayed, ⁴²“My Father, if you are willing to do it, permit that I do not have to undergo these terrible things that are about to happen to me [MTY]. But do not do what I want. Instead, do what you want.” ⁴³Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and caused him to become stronger. ⁴⁴He was greatly distressed. So he prayed more earnestly. His sweat fell down on the ground as though it was large drops of blood. ⁴⁵When he got up from praying, he returned to his disciples. He found

that they were sleeping. They were exhausted because they were very sorrowful. ⁴⁶ He *woke them* and said to them, “I am disappointed that you are sleeping! Why are you sleeping?” [RHQ] Get up! Pray that *God will help you* whenever you are tempted {when something *like this* tempts you!”

Luke 22:47-53

THEME: *Jesus' enemies captured him.*

⁴⁷ While *Jesus* was still speaking, a crowd *came to him*. Judas, *even though he was* one of the twelve *disciples*, was leading them. He came close to Jesus and kissed him *on the cheek to signal to those with him which one was Jesus*. ⁴⁸ Jesus said to him, “Judas, I am disappointed that it is by kissing me that you are enabling *my enemies* to seize *me*, the one who came from heaven! It is by kissing me *as though you loved me* that you are enabling *my enemies* to seize *me*, the one who came from heaven?” [RHQ] ⁴⁹ When the *disciples* who were around Jesus realized what was going to happen, they said, “Lord, shall *we(exc)* strike *them* with our swords?” ⁵⁰ One of them *drew his sword* and struck the servant of the high priest *to kill him, but only* cut off his right ear. ⁵¹ But Jesus said, “Do not *do* any more of that!” He touched the *servant's* ear and healed him. ⁵²⁻⁵³ Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the Temple guards, and the *Jewish* elders who had come to *seize* him, “It is ridiculous that you have come *here* with swords and clubs to capture [MTY] me, as if I were a bandit! Why have you come here with swords and clubs to capture [MTY] me, as if I were a bandit?” [RHQ] Day after day I was *with you* in the Temple *courtyard*, and you did not seize me! But this is the time [MTY] when *God is allowing* you to do *what you want*. It is also the time [MTY] when God is allowing *Satan, who rules* [MTY] in the darkness, to do *what he wants*.”

Luke 22:54-62

THEME: *Peter said three times that he did not know Jesus.*

⁵⁴ They seized *Jesus* and led him away. They brought him to the high priest's house. Peter followed *them* at a distance. ⁵⁵ They kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together. Peter sat among them. ⁵⁶ As the light *from the fire* shone *on his face*, a female servant saw him and looked intently at him. She said, “This man was also with *the man whom they have arrested*!” ⁵⁷ But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him!” ⁵⁸ A little later someone else saw Peter and said, “You(*sg*) also are one of those who *were with* the man *they arrested*!” But Peter said, “Man, I am not *one of them*!” ⁵⁹ About an hour later someone else said emphatically *about Peter*, “*The way that this man speaks shows that he is from Galilee district*. Certainly this man was also with the man whom *they arrested, who is from Galilee*!” ⁶⁰ But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you(*sg*) are talking about!” Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. ⁶¹ The Lord *Jesus* turned around and looked right at Peter. Then Peter remembered what the Lord had said to him, “This night, before the rooster crows, you(*sg*) will deny three times *that you know* me.” ⁶² And he went out *of the courtyard* and cried very sorrowfully.

Luke 22:63-65

THEME: *The soldiers made fun of Jesus.*

⁶³ The men who were guarding Jesus made fun of him and beat him. ⁶⁴ They put a blindfold on him and *beat him again*. Then they said to him, “*Because you(*sg*) say* [IRO] that you are a prophet, *prove it* by telling us who it was that struck you!” ⁶⁵ They said many other evil things about him, insulting him.

Luke 22:66-71

THEME: *The Jewish leaders asked Jesus about his identity.*

⁶⁶ At dawn *the next morning*, many of the *Jewish* leaders gathered together. The group included the chief priests and the men who taught the *Jewish* laws. They took Jesus to the Jewish Council. There they said to him, ⁶⁷ “If you(*sg*) are the Messiah, tell us!” But he replied, “If I tell you that, you will not believe me. ⁶⁸ If I ask you *what you think about the Messiah*, you will not answer me. ⁶⁹ But some day you will see *me*, the one who came from heaven, sitting next to almighty God and ruling [MTY]!” ⁷⁰ Then they all said, “If that is so, are you(*sg*) *saying that* you are <the Son of God/the Man who is also God>?” He said to them, “Yes, it is just like you say [MTY].” ⁷¹ Then they said *to each other*, “<We(*inc*) certainly do not need any more people to testify *against him*! Why should we ask for any more people to testify *against him*?> [RHQ]” We ourselves have heard him say [MTY] *that he is equal with God*!

Luke 23:1-5

THEME: *They accused Jesus before Pilate, the Roman governor.*

23 ¹ Then the whole group got up and took him to Pilate, *the Roman governor*. ² They began to accuse him, saying, “We(*exc*) have determined that this fellow has caused political trouble in our country. He has been *telling people that they should* not pay taxes to the Roman government [MTY]. Also, he says that he is the Messiah, a king!” ³ Pilate asked him, “Do you(*sg*) *claim that you are* the King of the Jews?” He replied, “*It is* as you have *just* now said.” ⁴ Pilate said to the chief

priests and *the rest of the crowd*, “I do not conclude that this man is guilty of any crime.”⁵ But they kept insisting, saying, “He is inciting the people to riot! He has been teaching his *ideas* throughout all of Judea *district*. He started *doing it* in Galilee *district* and now he is doing it here!”

Luke 23:6-12

THEME: *After Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, Jesus refused to answer Herod’s questions.*

⁶When Pilate heard that, he asked, “Is this man from Galilee *district*?”⁷ When they told him that Jesus was *from Galilee, which was the district* that Herod Antipas ruled, *he told them* to take Jesus to Herod Antipas, because Herod was in Jerusalem at that time.⁸ So *they did*. When Herod saw Jesus, he was very happy. He *had heard about Jesus*, and he had been hoping for a long time that he could see Jesus perform a miracle.⁹ So he asked Jesus many questions, but Jesus did not reply to *any of them*.¹⁰ The chief priests and men who taught the *Jewish* laws stood near him, accusing him very strongly.¹¹ Then Herod and his soldiers *made fun of/ridiculed* Jesus. They put gorgeous clothes on him to *mock him as being a king*. Then Herod sent him back to Pilate.¹² Until that time Herod and Pilate had been very hostile to each other, but that very day they became friends.

Luke 23:13-25

THEME: *Pilate was unsuccessful in his efforts to set Jesus free.*

¹³Pilate then gathered together the chief priests and other *Jewish* leaders and the crowd *that was still there*.¹⁴ He said to them, “You brought this man to me, saying that he had caused trouble among the people. But *I want you to know that* after having examined him while you were listening, I do not conclude that he is guilty of any of the things that you are accusing him about.¹⁵ Obviously Herod did not *conclude that* either, because he sent him back to me *without punishing him*. So it is clear that this man has not done anything for which *we(inc)* should kill him.¹⁶ So I will *have my soldiers* whip him and then release him.”¹⁷ But the whole crowd shouted, “Execute this man! Release Barabbas for us(*exc*)!”¹⁸ Barabbas was a man who had tried to persuade people in the city to rebel *against the Roman government*. While *doing that*, he had murdered *someone*. So he had been put {they had put him} in prison, *where he was waiting for them to execute him*.¹⁹ Because Pilate wanted to release Jesus, he tried to persuade the crowd again.²¹ But they kept shouting, “Command your soldiers to kill him by nailing him to a cross!” Have him crucified!”²² He *spoke to them* a third time and asked them, “Why? What crime has he committed? I have concluded that he has done nothing for which he deserves to die. So I will *have my soldiers* whip him and then release him.”²³ But they kept insisting. They shouted loudly that *Jesus* should be nailed {that *Pilate* should *have his soldiers* nail *Jesus*} to a cross. Finally, because they continued to shout [PRS] *so loudly*,²⁴ Pilate decided to do what they requested.²⁵ The man who had been {whom they had} put in prison because he had rebelled *against the government* and who had murdered *someone*, he released! That was the man whom the crowd had asked him to *release*. He put Jesus into the hands *of the soldiers*, to do what *the crowd* wanted.

Luke 23:26-31

THEME: *The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross.*

²⁶As the soldiers were taking *Jesus* away, they seized a man named Simon, *who was from Cyrene city in Africa*. He was returning to *Jerusalem* from out in the countryside. They *took from Jesus the cross that he had been carrying*. Then they put it on Simon’s shoulders, and *told him* to carry it behind Jesus.²⁷ A large crowd followed Jesus. The crowd included many women who were beating their breasts to *show how sad they were*, and wailing for him.²⁸ But Jesus turned to them and said, “You women of Jerusalem, do not cry for me! Instead, cry because of *what is going to happen to yourselves and your children*!”²⁹ I want you to know that there will soon be a time when people will say, ‘Women [SYN] who have never borne children or nursed babies are fortunate!’³⁰ Then, *in order that they will not have to suffer greatly when their enemies destroy this city, people who are left in the city* will say to the mountains, ‘Fall down on us!’ And people will say to the hills, ‘Cover us!’³¹ *I am innocent [MET]. I am like a living tree that people do not try to burn. But the people of Jerusalem deserve that their enemies punish them. They are like dry wood that is ready to burn.* So if they *nailed me to the cross*, *their enemies* will certainly do much worse things to them!/*what worse things will God do to them?*» [RHQ]”

Luke 23:32-49

THEME: *The things that happened when Jesus died.*

³²Two other men who were criminals were also being led away {*The soldiers* also led away two other men who were criminals}. They were going to be executed {*The soldiers* were going to execute them} *with Jesus*.³³ When they came to the place which is called ‘The Skull’, they nailed *Jesus* to a cross *after removing his clothes*. They did the same thing to the two criminals. They put one at the right *side of Jesus* and one at his left *side*.³⁴ Jesus said, “My Father, forgive them, because they do not realize *whom* they are doing *this to*.” Then *the soldiers* divided his clothing by gambling with something like dice, *to decide which piece of clothing each one would get*.³⁵ Many people stood nearby, watching. And the *Jewish* leaders *made fun of/ridiculed* Jesus, saying, “He *said [IRO] that he saved other people!* If he is the Messiah, the

^b Some Greek manuscripts add v 17, “Every year at the *Passover* festival *Pilate* had to release one prisoner for the people.”

one God has chosen, he should save himself!"³⁶ The soldiers also ridiculed him because he *claimed to be a king*. They came up to him and offered him some sour wine.³⁷ They said to him, "If you(*sg*) are the King of the Jews, save yourself!"³⁸ *They also fastened on the cross above his head a sign that stated why they were nailing him to the cross. But all it said was, 'This is the King of the Jews'.*

³⁹ One of the criminals who was hanging on a cross began to insult him, saying, "You(*sg*) said that you are the Messiah, so you must be powerful! So save yourself, and save us, too!"⁴⁰ But the other *criminal* rebuked him, saying, "«You(*sg*) should be afraid of God *punishing you!* Are you not afraid of God *punishing you?*» [RHQ] They are punishing him *and us* similarly.

⁴¹ They have justly decided that *we(inc) two* must die. They are punishing us as we deserve *for the evil things that we did*. But this man has done nothing wrong!"⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, *please* remember me *and take care of me* when you become king!"⁴³ Jesus replied, "I want you(*sg*) to know that today you(*sg*) will be with me in the place where everyone is happy!" (OR, that today you will be with me in Paradise!)

⁴⁴ *Then it was about noontime*. It became dark over the whole land, *and it stayed dark* until three o'clock in the afternoon.

⁴⁵ There was no light from the sun. Then the *thick curtain that closed off the most holy place* in the Temple split into two pieces. *That signified that ordinary people could now go into the presence of God.*⁴⁶ *As that happened*, Jesus shouted loudly, "Father, I put my spirit into your care [MTY]!" When he said that, he stopped breathing [EUP] *and died*.

⁴⁷ When the officer *who supervised the soldiers who were executing Jesus* saw what happened, he praised God *for the way Jesus died*, saying, "I am sure that this man had done nothing wrong!"⁴⁸ When the crowd of people who had gathered to see those events saw what happened, they returned *to their homes*, beating their breasts *to show that they were sorrowful*.⁴⁹ All of Jesus' friends, including the women who had come with him from Galilee *district*, stood at a distance and saw all that happened.

Luke 23:50-56

THEME: *Joseph and others buried Jesus while some women watched.*

⁵⁰ There was a man named Joseph who *came there*. He was from the town of Arimathea in Judea. He was a good and a righteous man, and he was a member of the *Jewish Council*.⁵¹ But he had not agreed with the other council *members* when they decided *to kill Jesus* and when they *planned how to do it*. He was waiting expectantly for *the time when God would send his king to begin to rule*.⁵² He went to Pilate and asked *Pilate to permit him to take Jesus' body and bury it*. *After Pilate allowed him to do that*,⁵³ *he and some others* took *Jesus' body* down from the cross. They wrapped it in a linen cloth. Then they put his body in a tomb that he had *hired others to dig out of a rock cliff*. No one had ever put a body in it before.⁵⁴ *They had to do it quickly because that was Friday, the day when people prepared things for the Jewish day of rest.* «The Sabbath/The day of rest» was about to start *at sunset, so they had to finish burying his body before sunset*.⁵⁵ The women who had come with *Jesus* from Galilee *district* followed *Joseph and the men who were with him*. They saw the tomb, and they saw how the men laid *Jesus' body inside it, and saw the men roll a huge stone across the entrance*.⁵⁶ Then the women returned to the houses *where they were staying*. *The following evening* they prepared spices and ointments to put *on Jesus' body*, but «on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day» they rested, according to what *Moses* had commanded.

Luke 24:1-12

THEME: *Some women discovered that Jesus had become alive again.*

24¹ Before dawn on Sunday those women went to the tomb. They took with them the spices that they had prepared to *put on Jesus' body*.² They discovered that the stone had been rolled away from *the entrance to the tomb*.³ They went in the tomb, but the body of the Lord Jesus was not there!⁴ They did not know what to think about that. Then suddenly two men stood by them wearing bright shining clothes!⁵ The *women* were frightened. As they prostrated themselves on the ground, the two men said to them, "«You should not be seeking someone who is alive in *a place where they bury dead people!* Why are you seeking in *a place where they bury dead people* someone who is alive?» [RHQ] ⁶ He is not here; he has «become alive again/risen from the dead»! Remember that while he was still with you in Galilee *district* he said to you,⁷ *Even though I am the one who came from heaven, someone will enable sinful men to seize [MTY] me. They will kill me by nailing me to a cross. But on the third day after that, I will become alive again.*»⁸ The *women* remembered that he had said that.⁹ So they left the tomb and went to the eleven *apostles* and his other *disciples* and told them those things.¹⁰ The ones who kept telling those things to the apostles were Mary from Magdala *village*, Joanna, Mary who was the mother of James, and the other women *who were* with them.¹¹ But they thought that what the women *said* was nonsense. They did not believe what the women said.¹² But Peter got up and ran to the tomb *anyway*. He stooped down *and looked inside*. He saw the linen cloths *in which Jesus' body had been wrapped*. *The cloths were* by themselves (OR, *He did not see anything else*). So, wondering what had happened, he went to where he was staying.^c

^c Many Greek manuscripts do not include verse 12.

Luke 24:13-35

THEME: *Jesus appeared to two disciples as they were walking to Emmaus.*

¹³ That same day two of *Jesus' disciples* were walking to a village named Emmaus. It was about <seven miles/eleven kilometers> from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about all the things that had happened to *Jesus*. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing those things, *Jesus* himself approached them and started walking with them. ¹⁶ But they were prevented {*something* prevented them} from recognizing [MTY] him. ¹⁷ *Jesus* said to them, "What have you two been talking about while you were walking?" They stopped, and their faces looked very sad. ¹⁸ One of them, whose name was Cleopas, said, "<You(sg) must be the only person who is visiting Jerusalem for the Passover festival who does not know the events that have happened there in recent days!/Are you the only person who is visiting Jerusalem for the Passover festival who does not know the events that have happened there in recent days?> [RHQ]" ¹⁹ He said to them, "What events?" They replied, "*The things that happened* to *Jesus*, the man from Nazareth, who was a prophet. Many people saw him perform great miracles, and God enabled him to teach wonderful messages!" ²⁰ But our chief priests and leaders handed him over to the Roman authorities. The authorities sentenced him to die, and they killed him by nailing him to a cross. ²¹ We(exc) were hoping that he was the one who would free us Israelites from our enemies! But *this does not seem possible now*, because three days have already passed since that happened. ²² On the other hand, some women from our group amazed us. Early this morning they went to the tomb, ²³ but *Jesus' body* was not there! They came back and said that they had seen some angels in a vision. The angels said that he was alive! ²⁴ Then some of those who were with us went to the tomb. They saw that things were exactly as the women had reported. But they did not see *Jesus*." ²⁵ He said to them, "*You two foolish men! You are so slow to believe all that the prophets have written about the Messiah!*" ²⁶ <You should certainly have known that it was necessary that the Messiah should suffer all those things and die, and then enter his glorious home in heaven!/Was not it necessary that the Messiah should suffer all those things and die, and then enter his glorious home in heaven?> [RHQ]" ²⁷ Then he explained to them all the things that the prophets had written in the Scriptures about himself. He started with what Moses [MTY] wrote and then explained to them what all the other prophets wrote.

²⁸ They came near to the village to which the two men were going. He indicated that he would go further, ²⁹ but they urged him to not do that. They said, "Stay with us tonight, because it is late in the afternoon and it will soon be dark." So he went in the house to stay with them. ³⁰ When they sat down to eat, he took some bread and asked God to bless it. He broke it and gave some pieces to them. ³¹ And then God enabled them to recognize [MTY] him. But immediately he disappeared! ³² They said to each other, "*While we were walking along the road and he talked with us and enabled us(exc) to understand the Scriptures, we became so excited that it was as though* [MET] a fire was burning within us [RHQ]! We should not stay here; we should go tell others what happened!" ³³ So they left immediately and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven apostles and others who had gathered together with them. ³⁴ They told those two men, "It is true that the Lord has become alive again, and he has appeared to Simon/Peter!" ³⁵ Then those two men told the others what had happened as they were walking along the road. They also told them how they both recognized him as he broke some bread for them.

Luke 24:36-49

THEME: *Jesus appeared to many of his disciples and taught them more and gave them other instructions.*

³⁶ As they were saying that, *Jesus* himself suddenly appeared among them. He said to them, "*May God give you inner peace!*" ³⁷ They were startled and afraid, because they thought that they were seeing a ghost! ³⁸ He said to them, "<You should not be alarmed!/Why are you alarmed?> [RHQ] And <you should not be doubting that I am alive/Jesus!/why are you doubting that I am alive/Jesus?> [RHQ]" ³⁹ Look at the wounds in my hands and my feet! You can touch me and see my body. Then you can see that it is really I myself. You can tell that I am really alive because ghosts do not have bodies, as you see that I have!" ⁴⁰ After he said that, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his feet. ⁴¹ They were joyful and amazed, but they still did not believe that he was really alive (OR, that he was the one that they were seeing). So he said to them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" ⁴² So they gave him a piece of broiled fish. ⁴³ While they were watching, he took it and ate it.

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "*I will repeat* what I told you while I was still with you: Everything that was written about me by Moses and the other prophets [MTY] and in the Psalms must be fulfilled!" ⁴⁵ Then he enabled them to understand the things that had been written about him in the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He said to them, "This is what they wrote: That the Messiah would suffer and die, but on the third day after that he would become alive again. ⁴⁷ They also wrote that the message must be preached {that his followers must preach the message} everywhere that people must turn from their sinful ways for God to forgive their sins. They wrote that his followers should preach that message, claiming his authority [MTY]. They wrote that they should start preaching it in Jerusalem and then go and preach it to all ethnic groups. ⁴⁸ You apostles must tell people that you know that those things that happened to me are true. ⁴⁹ And I want you to know that I will send the Holy Spirit [MTY] to you, as my Father promised that he would do. But you must stay in this city until God fills you with the power of his Spirit."

Luke 24:50-53

THEME: Jesus left his disciples and returned to heaven.

⁵⁰ Then *Jesus* led them outside *the city* until they came near Bethany *village*. There he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ As he was doing that, he left them *and went up to heaven*. ⁵² They worshipped him. And then they returned to Jerusalem very joyfully. ⁵³ Each day [SYN] they went into the Temple *courtyard*, and spent a lot of time praising God.

The Gospel that was written by John

John 1:1-18

THEME: *This book is about Jesus, who was eternally with God but also became a human being to reveal God to mankind.*

1 ¹The one who expresses [MET] *◀God's character/what God is like▶* has always existed *◀from the beginning [MTY] of everything/before everything began▶*. He has always existed with God, and he has **God's nature**. ²He always existed with God *before he began [MTY] to create anything*. ³He is the one by whom *God* caused everything to exist. He is the one who created absolutely everything [LIT]. ⁴He is the one who *caused everything to live*. He, who caused us people to live, *revealed to us the truth about God as a light [MET] reveals what is in the darkness*. ⁵People do not want him to reveal *that what they do is evil [MET], just like darkness is evil*. But *just like darkness cannot put out light [MET], evil people have never prevented the one who was like a light from revealing God's truth* (OR, *evil people have never understood the one who was like a light*.)

⁶A man whose name was John was sent by God {God sent a man whose name was John}. ⁷He came to tell people *about the one who was like [MET] a light*. He came to show that everything that the *one who was like a light [MET]* said was true, in order that he could enable all people to believe *in the one who was like a light*. ⁸John himself was not the *one who was like a light [MET]*. Instead, he came to tell others about that *one who was like a light*. ⁹*While John was doing that*, the one who was truly *like a light* was *about to show himself* to the world. He was the one who enables all people *to know about God*, as a light [MET] enables *people to know what is in the darkness*.

¹⁰Although the one *who was like a light* was *here* on the earth, and although he was the one whom *God* caused to create everything, *most* people [MTY, HYP] did not realize who he was. (OR, although he was the one whom *God* caused to create everything, *most* people did not accept him.) ¹¹Although he came to the land that belonged to him *because he created it, most of his own people, the Jews*, rejected him (OR, did not accept him). ¹²But those *of us who welcomed him, God* authorized *that we would have a relationship with him [MET] like children have a relationship with their father*. We were people who believed *that what he said* about himself [MTY] *was true*. ¹³We became *like God's children*, not because our ancestors *belonged to God*, or because of someone's sexual desires, nor because some man desired to have children like himself. Instead, we were caused by God {God caused us} to become *like* his children.

¹⁴The one who expresses [MET] *◀God's character/what God is like▶* became a human being, and he lived among us *for a while*. As a result, we saw how wonderful he is. He came from *God* his father, and there was no other person as wonderful as he. He was wonderful because he always acted *◀kindly toward us/in ways we did not deserve▶*, and he always *spoke* truthfully to us *about God*.

¹⁵*One day* when John was telling people about him, *he saw Jesus*. Then he shouted to them, "I told you *previously* that someone will come later who is more important than I am, since he existed *long* before me. **This is the man I was talking about!**" ¹⁶We have all benefited very much from what he has done. Again and again, he has acted in kindness toward us in ways we did not deserve. ¹⁷Moses proclaimed *God's laws to our ancestors*. But what Jesus Christ did for us *was much better*. He acted in kindness toward us in ways we did not deserve and told us the truth *about God*. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. But God's only Son, *Jesus*, who has always had a very close relationship with God, has told us about God.

John 1:19-28

THEME: *When religious authorities asked John about his identity, he said he was preparing people for the coming of the Messiah, who was much more important than himself.*

¹⁹The Jewish *leaders* [SYN] in Jerusalem *city* sent some *Jewish* priests and *◀Levites/men who worked in the temple▶* *to where John was* to ask him some questions. They said to him, "What do you *claim about yourself*?" ²⁰So John told them the truth, and he told them clearly [DOU]. He said, "*I am not ◀the Messiah/God's chosen king▶!*" ²¹Then they asked him, "Then what *do you say about yourself*? Are you *the prophet Elijah that was prophesied to return {◀someone/another prophet▶ prophesied would return} before the Messiah*?" He replied, "No, *I am not*." Then they asked him, "Are you the prophet *like Moses that ◀we are waiting for/God promised to send▶*?" He replied, "No." ²²So they asked him, "Then who do you *claim to be*? Tell us so that we can *go back and report* to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³John replied, "*I am the one the prophet Isaiah said would proclaim this new message loudly to the people who would pass by in this desolate area: 'Prepare yourselves to receive the Lord when he comes [MET], just like people prepare a road for an important official.'*"

²⁴Some of those people *who were questioning* John were ones who had been sent by the Pharisee *religious group* {whom the Pharisee *religious group* had sent}. ²⁵They asked John, "Since *you say* you are not the Messiah, nor *the prophet* Elijah, nor the prophet *like Moses, what authority* do you have? *Furthermore, why are you baptizing Jews, treating them as though they were non-Jews who wanted to become Jews*?" ²⁶John replied, "I am *just* baptizing people with water *to prepare them to welcome the Messiah*. But *right now* someone is standing among you whom you people do not know.

²⁷ He will preach to you after I am gone. He is so important that I am not worthy to serve him as a slave [MET] by untying his sandals.”

²⁸ Those things happened at a place called Bethany, on the east side of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing people.

John 1:29-34

THEME: John the Baptizer announced that Jesus was the one who would become a sacrifice to remove guilt for sin, and how God had confirmed that Jesus was the Son of God.

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him. He said to the people, “Look! Here is the man whom God has appointed to be a sacrifice [MET], like the lambs that the people of Israel sacrificed! By sacrificing himself he will make it possible for everyone in the world to be no longer guilty for having sinned.” ³⁰ He is the one about whom I said before, ‘Someone will come later who is more important than I am, since he existed long before me.’ ³¹ I myself did not previously recognize that he was the Messiah. But now I know who he is, and I have baptized people with water to enable you people of Israel to recognize who he is.”

³² John spoke clearly what God had shown him about Jesus. He said, “I saw God’s Spirit as he was descending from heaven in the form of a dove. The Spirit remained on Jesus. ³³ I myself did not know previously that he was the Messiah. However, God sent me to baptize people with water, people who said they wanted to turn from their sinful ways. While I was doing that, God told me, ‘The man on whom you will see my Spirit descend and remain is the one who will put the Holy Spirit within you(pl) to truly change your lives.’ ³⁴ I saw the Spirit descend on him, and I tell you that he is <the Son of God/the person who is both God and man>.”

John 1:35-42

THEME: After John declared again that Jesus would be a sacrifice to remove guilt for sin, four men decided to become Jesus’ disciples.

³⁵ The next day John was at the same place again <with two of us/with two of his^a disciples>. ³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look! There is the man God has appointed to be a sacrifice, like the lambs [MET] the people of Israel have sacrificed!” ³⁷ <When we/those two disciples> heard John say this, we/they went with Jesus. ³⁸ Jesus turned around and saw us/them coming behind him. So he asked us/them, “What do you want?” We/They replied, “Teacher, tell us where you are staying, because we want to talk with you.” ³⁹ He replied, “Come with me, and you will see where I am staying!” So we/they went with him and saw where he was staying. We/They stayed with him until about 4 o’clock (OR, from about 4 PM until the next day).

⁴⁰ <One of us/One of the two men> who heard what John had said and who went with Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s younger brother. ⁴¹ After Andrew left Jesus, the first thing he did was to find his own older brother Simon and say to him, “We have found the Messiah!”^b ⁴² Then he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked intently at him, and then said, “You are Simon. Your father’s name is John. You will be given {I will give you} the name Cephas.” *Cephas is an Aramaic name that means ‘solid rock.’ It means the same in Greek as the name Peter.*

John 1:43-51

THEME: Jesus told Nathaniel that he knew about him supernaturally, but that he would do things that were more surprising than that.

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to leave the Jordan River valley. He went to Galilee district and (OR, on the way there he) found a man named Philip. Jesus said to him, “Come with me!” ⁴⁴ Philip and Andrew and Peter were all from Bethsaida town. ⁴⁵ Then Philip searched for Nathaniel and found him, and said to him, “We have met the Messiah, the one Moses wrote about! The prophets also prophesied that he would come. He is Jesus, from Nazareth town. His father’s name is Joseph.” ⁴⁶ Nathaniel replied, “Nazareth? <Nothing good can come from such an unimportant place!/Can anything good come from such an unimportant place?> [RHQ]” Philip replied, “Come and see!” ⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathaniel approaching, he said about Nathaniel, “Here is an example of a good Israelite! He never deceives anyone!” ⁴⁸ Nathaniel asked him, “How do you know what I am like?” Jesus replied, “I saw you before Philip called you, when you were by yourself under the fig tree.” ⁴⁹ Then Nathaniel declared, “Teacher, you must be <the Son of God/the person who is both God and man>! You are the King of Israel we have been waiting for!” ⁵⁰ Jesus replied to him, “You [RHQ] believe those things about me because I told you I saw you when you were under the fig tree. I was able to see you supernaturally even though I was far away from you. But you will see me do things that are more surprising than that!” ⁵¹ Then Jesus said to

^a Many commentaries suggest that John, the writer, was one of the two disciples. This seems to follow John’s pattern of never referring to himself in the first person in this gospel. But it seems clear that John intended his readers to know that he was referring to himself. So this translation suggests that it would be very appropriate to use first person pronouns whenever it is clear that John was present as a participant.

^b The Greek text says “We have found the Messiah.” ‘Messiah’ is the Hebrew word which, translated into Greek, is ‘Christ.’ Both ‘Christ’ and ‘Messiah’ mean ‘<God’s chosen King/Savior>.’

him, "This is the absolute truth: *Just like what your ancestor Jacob saw long ago in a vision, some day you(pl) will see heaven opened up, and you will see God's angels ascending from me and descending on me, the one who came from heaven.*"

John 2:1-11

THEME: *In Cana Jesus did his first miracle, turning water into delicious wine.*

2 ¹Two days later there was a wedding *celebration* in Cana town, in Galilee *district*. Jesus' mother was there. ²Jesus and we his disciples *were also there, because we had been invited {someone had invited us} also.* ³When the guests had drunk all the wine *that was there*, Jesus' mother said to him, "The wine is all gone; *can you do something about that?*" ⁴Jesus said to her, "Ma'am/Woman, <do not tell me *what to do!*/why do you tell me *what to do?*> [RHQ] *Let me take care of it.* It is not yet time [MTY] *to show that I am the Messiah by working miracles.*" ⁵Then Jesus' mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you!" ⁶There were six *empty* stone jars there. The Jews *put water in them* to use for washing things *to make them acceptable to God.* Each jar held <20 to 30 gallons/80 to 120 liters>. ⁷Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water!" So they filled the jars to the brim. ⁸Then he told them, "Now, ladle out some *of it* and take it <to the head waiter/to the master of ceremonies>." So the servants did that. ⁹<The head waiter/The master of ceremonies> tasted the water, which had now become wine. He did not know where the wine had come from, but the servants who had ladled out the wine knew. *The wine was delicious!* So he called the bridegroom over, ¹⁰and said to him, "Everyone *else* serves the best wine first. Then when the guests have drunk so much *that they can not tell the difference, they serve the cheap wine.* But you *have not done what others do.* You have kept the best wine until now!" ¹¹That was the first miracle that Jesus did. He did it in Cana town, in Galilee *district*. By doing it he showed how awesome he is, and as a result, we his disciples believed that he *truly was the Messiah.*

John 2:12

THEME: *Jesus and others went to Capernaum and stayed there several days.*

¹²Jesus then went down to Capernaum city with his mother and *younger* brothers and *us* his disciples. We stayed there several days.

John 2:13-25

THEME: *After Jesus expelled the merchants from the temple, the Jewish leaders wanted him to do a miracle to show by what authority he did that. He told them metaphorically that he would become alive again three days after he died.*

¹³Later, when it was almost time for the Jewish Passover *celebration*, Jesus *and we his disciples* went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴There, in the Temple *courtyard*, he saw some men who were selling cattle, sheep, and pigeons *for sacrifices.* He also saw men who were sitting at tables, *making a big profit as they gave people Temple tax* coins in exchange for *their Roman* coins. ¹⁵Then Jesus made a whip from some cords and *used it to chase out the sheep and cattle from the Temple courtyard.* By overturning their tables he scattered the coins of the men who were exchanging them. ¹⁶He said to those who were selling doves, "Take these doves away *from here!* Stop *defiling* my Father's Temple *by making it a market!*" ¹⁷Then *we* disciples remembered that these words had been written {that *someone/David* had written *these words*} *in the Scriptures prophesying what the Messiah would say:* "Others [PRS] will strongly oppose me because I greatly desire that *people respect your Temple.*"

¹⁸So *one of the Jewish leaders* [SYN] replied to him, "What miracle will you perform to show us that *you have authority from God* to do these things?" ¹⁹Jesus replied to them, "If/When you destroy this temple, I will build it again within three days." ²⁰So the Jewish *leaders* [SYN] said, "We have been building this Temple for forty-six years *and it is not finished yet!* So <there is no way **you** will build it within three days!/how will **you** build it within three days?> [RHQ]" ²¹But when Jesus said that about the temple, *he was really talking about his own body.* ²²Later, after Jesus had *died and had become alive again, we his disciples* remembered the words he had said. As a result, we believed *what had been prophesied in the Scriptures about the Messiah becoming alive again,* and we believed that what Jesus said *was true.*

²³While Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many people came to believe *that he was the Messiah* because they saw the miracles he was performing. ²⁴But he did not let them tell him what he should do *as the Messiah,* because he knew within himself what they were all *thinking.* ²⁵He did not need anyone to tell him what others were thinking, because he already knew what they were *thinking and wanting.*

John 3:1-15

THEME: *Jesus told Nicodemus that people needed to be born again spiritually to have eternal life.*

3 ¹There was a man named Nicodemus, who was a member of the Jewish religious council. He belonged to the Pharisee *religious sect.* ²He went to see Jesus at night, *to talk to him about God's kingdom.* He said to Jesus, "Teacher, *we believe that you are a teacher who has come from God. We believe this because we know that someone could perform the*

miracles you are doing only if God were helping him.”³ Jesus replied to him, “Listen to this carefully: Unless people are born again and *have a new life from God*, they cannot *even* see the place where God rules [MET]!”⁴ Then Nicodemus said to him, “<No one can be born when he is old!/How can anyone be born when he is old?> [RHQ] <There is no way he can enter his mother’s womb and be born a second time!/How can he enter his mother’s womb and be born a second time?> [RHQ]”⁵ Jesus answered, “Note this: Being born naturally is not *enough*; people need to also be born *spiritually* by God’s Spirit. If that does not happen, they cannot experience God ruling [MET] *their lives*.⁶ If someone is born as a result of what humans *do*, that person becomes a human being. But those who are born *again* as a result of what *God’s Spirit does receive a new spiritual nature from God*.⁷ Do not be surprised about my telling you that you must be born again *and have a new life from God*.⁸ *Let me illustrate*: The wind blows wherever it wants to blow. You hear its sound, but you do not know where the wind comes from or where it is going. Similarly, those *who do not know God cannot understand/control/predict* how people are born again as a result of what *God’s spirit does*.⁹ Nicodemus replied to him, “How can that happen?”¹⁰ Jesus replied to him, “You(sg) are a *well-known* teacher among *us* Israelite people, so <I am surprised that you do not understand these things!/how is it that you do not understand these things?> [RHQ]”¹¹ Listen to this carefully: <My disciples and I/> tell you(pl) about the things that my disciples and I have seen and know *are true*, but you(pl) do not admit that what my disciples and I are saying *is true*.¹² I have told you about the things *that happen here* on earth that are true, but you(pl) do not believe me. So if I tell you(sg) about things *that happen* in heaven, <you certainly will not believe me!/how will you believe me?> [RHQ]”¹³ I am the only one who has gone up to heaven; no one else has gone up there. I am also the one who came down from heaven. *So I know what happens there*.¹⁴ *Long ago when the Israelite people rebelled against God* in the desolate area, *God sent poisonous snakes to bite them*. But when Moses lifted up *on a pole the model of a poisonous snake, everyone who looked at that model was healed from their snake bites*. Similarly, *even though I am the one who came from heaven, some day people will lift me up on a cross to kill me*.¹⁵ As a result, everyone who <believes/trusts> in me will have eternal life.”^c

John 3:16-21

THEME: *God sent his Son into the world to save everyone who trusts in him.*

¹⁶ God loved us people [MTY] in the world so much that he gave his only Son as a *sacrifice for us*, in order that everyone who believes in him would not be separated from God forever. Instead, they would have eternal life.¹⁷ When God sent his Son into the world, his purpose was not to punish the *people in* [MTY] the world for their sins. Instead, he sent him in order that they might be saved by him {he might save them} *from being <guilty/punished> for their sins*.¹⁸ Everyone who trusts in his Son, *God says that they will not be punished* {that he will not punish them}. But God has already *said that* everyone who does not trust in his Son will be punished {that he will punish everyone who does not trust in his Son}, because they have not trusted in what his only Son *has done for them*.¹⁹ The *one who was like a light* [MET] *to reveal God’s truth to us* came into the world. But people loved doing what was *evil, like* darkness [MET] *is evil*, instead of loving the *one who was like a light*. That is the reason *God will judge people and condemn them*.²⁰ Everyone who does what is evil hates the *one who is like a light*, and they will not come to the *one who is like a light*, because it would be shown {*the one who is like a light* would show} that their deeds *are evil, and he would rebuke them*.²¹ But those who live according to *God’s truth* come to the *one who is like a light*, in order that it may be seen clearly {that people may see clearly} that the things they have done they did them because *they have depended* on God.

John 3:22-36

THEME: *When many people began to become Jesus’ disciples, and John the Baptizer declared that Jesus was greater than he, the Jewish leaders rejected John’s and Jesus’ testimony that Jesus was equal to God.*

²² Sometime later Jesus and we disciples went to Judea district. He stayed with us there and *directed us* as we baptized people.

²³ John *the Baptizer* was also baptizing people. He was doing that at *Aenon village* near *Salim town in Samaria district*, because there were many springs in that area. *Many* people kept coming to *John* and were being baptized {he was baptizing them}.²⁴ That happened before John was put {they put John} in prison.²⁵ Then some of John’s disciples and a certain Jew started arguing about the Jewish rituals of washing things to *make them acceptable to God*.²⁶ Then those disciples went to John and said to him, “Teacher, *do you remember* the man who was with you when you were baptizing people on the other side of the Jordan River? He is the one you were telling us about. Well, now he is baptizing people, and many people are going to him *instead of coming to us!*”²⁷ John replied, “A person can become *important* only if God [MTY] permits it. *So we should not be jealous about Jesus being popular!*”²⁸ You yourselves can verify what I said. I told you that I am not <the Messiah/God’s promised king>. Instead, I *told you that* I was sent {that *God sent me*} to prepare the way for him.²⁹ *Let me illustrate* [MET]: *He is like a <bridegroom/man who is being married>, and I am like his friend*. The friend of the bridegroom stands *there* and waits *for him to come*. That friend is very happy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice *when he arrives*. Similarly, I am very happy *about what you have told me*.³⁰ It is necessary for Jesus to become more important *by making more disciples than I have*, and for me to become less *important*.”

^c Some people think that what Jesus told Nicodemus continues through v. 21, but the best evidence suggests that verses 16-21 are John’s comments.

³¹ Jesus came from heaven. He is more important than anyone else. Those who are born from *parents here* on earth [MTY] are just humans, and they speak about things *that happen here* on the earth. But since he came from heaven, his *words are more important than anyone else's*. ³² He tells people what he has seen and what he heard *in heaven*, but very few people [HYP] listen to what he says. ³³ Those who have accepted what he has said verify that what God has said is true. ³⁴ *We know it is true* because Jesus, the one God sent, speaks the message of God. *That is also true* because God causes his Spirit to live *in Jesus* to completely *direct everything he says and does*. ³⁵ God loves his Son, and has caused him to have control/power over everything. ³⁶ Those who trust in *God's Son* have eternal life. But those who reject God's Son will never have *eternal* life. Instead, God is angry with them *and he will surely punish them*.

John 4:1-30

THEME: *While Jesus talked with a Samaritan woman, he showed by his God-given knowledge of her personal life that he is the life-giving Messiah.*

4 ¹⁻² *At that time, many people were asking* Jesus to baptize them. He did not baptize people; it was *we* his disciples who were doing the baptizing. But when some of the Pharisee *religious group* heard *people say that* Jesus was making more disciples than John *the Baptizer* and was baptizing them, *they became very jealous*. ³ When the Lord *Jesus* heard about that, *so that the Pharisees would not cause trouble for him*, he left Judea *district*, and went again *with us disciples* to Galilee *district*.

⁴ *He knew that God wanted* him to travel through Samaria *district*. ⁵ So we arrived at a town named Sychar in Samaria *district*. That was near the plot of ground that *our ancestor* Jacob had given to his son Joseph *long ago*. ⁶⁻⁸ The well that *used to belong to Jacob* was on that plot of ground. Jesus was tired from walking. So while *we* disciples went into the town to buy some food, he sat down alongside the well. It was about noontime. A woman who *lived there* in Samaria came to get some water *from the well*. Jesus said to her, "Will you give me *from the well* some water *to drink*?" The woman *knew that Jews did not like <to touch things that belong to Samaritans/to come near Samaritans>*, (OR, Jews did not like to associate with Samaritans.) ⁹ so the woman said to him, "You are a Jew, and I am from Samaria. Furthermore, I am a woman. So *<I am surprised that you are asking me for a drink of water!/how is it that you are asking me for a drink of water?>*" [RHQ]¹⁰ Jesus replied to her, "If you (sg) knew what God *wanted to* give you, and if you knew who I am, the one who is asking you for a drink, you would have asked me, and I would have given you water that gives life." ¹¹ She *thought he was talking about ordinary water*. So she said to him, "Sir, you do not have a bucket or a rope with which to get water *from the well*, and the well is deep. So *since you can not get water from this well*, where can you get that life-giving water?" ¹² Our ancestor Jacob left us this well. He drank water from it, and there was *enough good water* so that his sons and his flocks of *sheep and goats* drank from it also. *Do you claim that you are greater than Jacob, and because of that you can give us life-giving water?*" ¹³ Jesus replied to her, "Everyone who drinks water from this well will later become thirsty again. ¹⁴ But those who drink the water that I will give them will never be thirsty again. On the contrary, the water that I give them will become in their inner beings like a spring of water that will enable them to have eternal life." ¹⁵ The woman *did not understand that Jesus was speaking figuratively about something that would sustain her spiritually*. So she said to him, "Sir, give me that kind of water so that I will not get thirsty again, and so that I will not have to keep returning here to get water!"

¹⁶ *Jesus knew that she did not understand, but he wanted to show her by his God-given knowledge of her personal life that because he was the Messiah he could supply her spiritual need*. So he said to her, "Woman, go and call your husband, and bring him here!" ¹⁷ She replied, "I do not have a husband!" Jesus said to her, "You said that you do not have a husband, and that is true. ¹⁸ It is also true that you have had five husbands *one by one*. And the man you are living with now is not your husband! What you have said is very true."

¹⁹ The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive you must be a prophet *because you are able to know people's secrets*. ²⁰ But *let me ask you a different question*: Our ancestors worshipped God here on *Gerazim mountain*, but you *Jews* say that Jerusalem is the place where we must worship God. *So who is right?*" ²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me *when I say that* there will be a time when it will not *matter whether* you worship God *our Father* on this mountain or in Jerusalem or *somewhere else*. ²² You *people from Samaria* do not know the one you are worshipping. But we (exc) *Jews* know whom we worship, because it is from *us Jews* that *God has sent the one who will save people from the guilt of their sins*. ²³ However, there will be a time when those who genuinely worship God will worship him as *God's Spirit directs* and according to *God's* truth. In fact, that time is now. Those are the kind of worshippers my Father seeks. ²⁴ God is a spiritual being. So it is necessary that those who worship him must worship him as his Spirit *directs and according to God's truth*." ²⁵ The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will tell us *everything we need to know*." ('Messiah' and 'Christ' *both mean 'God's promised king'*.) ²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I, the one speaking to you, am *the Messiah!*"

²⁷ Just then *we* disciples returned *from town*. *Since it was contrary to our custom for Jewish religious teachers to converse with a woman they did not know*, we were surprised that he was talking to a woman. However, none of us asked her, "What do you want?" and none of us asked him, "Why are you talking with her?"

²⁸ The woman left her water jar there and went into the town. She said to the people there, ²⁹ "Come and see a man who was *able to tell me all about my past life* [HYP], *even though I never met him before!* Could this man be the Messiah?" ³⁰ So *many people* left the town and started going where Jesus was.

John 4:31-38

THEME: *Jesus told his disciples that what sustained him was doing his Father's will, which meant convincing non-Jewish people to believe in him.*

³¹ Meanwhile, we disciples were urging him, "Teacher, eat *some of the food we brought!*" ³² But he said to us, "I have food to eat that you do not know anything about!" ³³ So we started saying to each other, "◀Surely no one has brought him any food *when we were not here!*/Has anyone brought him any food *when we were not here?*▶ [RHQ]"³⁴ Jesus said to us, "Doing what *my Father* who sent me wants *me to do* and finishing the work he *gave me to do* is ◀*what sustains me/like my food*▶ [MET]. ³⁵ *At this time of the year* you are saying (OR, your ancestors used to say), 'There are four months left before we harvest *the crops.*' But I say to you, look carefully *at the non-Jewish people around here.* *God says, 'They are ready to accept my message* [MET], *like crops in fields that are ready for people to harvest.* ³⁶ *If you enable them to accept my message,* I will reward you [MET], *as an owner of a field* pays those who harvest the crops. Because of your work, people will gain eternal life.' *I have been telling people God's message. That is like* [MET] a man who plants seeds. *You will help people to accept my message. That will be like* [MET] harvesting crops. *When that happens,* both you and I will rejoice. ³⁷ As a result, this saying will become true: One person plants seeds, but others harvest *the crops.* ³⁸ I am sending you to *enable people to accept my message, but you will not be the first ones who tell them God's message.* Others *previously* worked hard to *tell people God's message,* and now you will be harvesting the results of their work."

John 4:39-42

THEME: *Many Samaritans believed that Jesus was the Messiah.*

³⁹ Many of the Samaria *district* people who *lived* in that town believed that Jesus was *the Messiah* because they heard what that woman said *about Jesus,* "That man was *able to* tell me all about my past life [HYP]" ⁴⁰ So when those people of Samaria came to him, they urged him to stay with them. So we stayed there two days. ⁴¹ Many more of them believed ◀*in Jesus/that he was the Messiah*▶ because of his message. ⁴² They told the woman, "We believe in Jesus *now,* but not *just* because of what you told us. Now we have heard *his message* ourselves. And now we know that this man truly is the one who *can save the people in the world* [MTY] *from the guilt of their sins.*"

John 4:43-54

THEME: *After Jesus healed an official's son, the official and his family believed that Jesus is the Messiah.*

⁴³⁻⁴⁴ Jesus had said *previously* that people did not honor prophets *like himself when they tried to teach people* in their own home area. So, two days later, Jesus and we disciples left that area and went to *his own area in Galilee district, because he knew that people there wouldn't think very highly of him, and as a result the Jewish leaders would not be jealous.* ⁴⁵ However, when we arrived in Galilee *district, many* of the people there welcomed him, because they had been in Jerusalem during the *Passover* celebration and had seen all the things he did there. ⁴⁶ Jesus went again to Cana *town* in Galilee *district.* That was where he *previously* turned water into wine. There was one of the king's officials who lived in Capernaum *city,* whose son was very sick. ⁴⁷ When that man heard *others say* that Jesus had returned to Galilee *district* from Judea *district,* he went to Jesus *in Cana* and pleaded with him, "Please come down to *Capernaum* and heal my son, who is about to die!" ⁴⁸ Jesus said to him, "You people will believe *my message* only if you see me perform *more miracles!*" ⁴⁹ But the official said to him, "Sir, ◀*I believe in you/I believe that you came from God*▶. *So please come down to my home before my son dies!*" ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, "Then you may go *home.* Your son ◀*will live/not die!*▶!" The man believed what Jesus said, and left. ⁵¹ *The next day* while he was on the way home, his servants met him. They told him, "Your child is going to live!" ⁵² He asked them, "At what time did my son start to become well?" They said to him, "His fever ceased yesterday *afternoon* at one o'clock." ⁵³ Then the boy's father realized that this was the time Jesus told him, "Your son will ◀*live/not die.*▶." So he and all the people in his house believed *that Jesus was the Messiah.*

⁵⁴ That was the second miracle that Jesus performed in Galilee *district,* after he had returned from Judea *district.*

John 5:1-13

THEME: *The Jewish leaders did not like the fact that Jesus healed a paralyzed man on the Sabbath day.*

5 ¹ Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem when the Jews were having *another* celebration. ² At one of the gates *into the city* called the Sheep Gate, there is a pool. In our language we call it Bethzatha. *Around the pool* were five open areas with roofs over them. ³ Many people were lying there. They were people who were blind, lame, or paralyzed.^d ⁵ One of those who was there had been paralyzed for thirty-eight years. ⁶ Jesus saw him lying there and found out that the man had been like that for a long time. He said to the man, "Do you want to become well?" ⁷ The paralyzed man replied to him, "Yes, sir, *I want to get well, but* there is no one to help me get down into the pool when the water is stirred {stirs}. While

^d Some very old Greek manuscripts add these words which include v. 4: "They were waiting for the water in the pool to stir. From time to time God would *send down* an angel, and the angel would stir the water. Then the first person who got down into the water after the water was stirred would be healed of whatever disease that person had."

I am trying to get *to the pool*, someone else always gets there before me.”⁸ Jesus said to him, “Get up! Then pick up your mat and walk!”⁹ The man immediately was healed. He picked up his mat and started walking!

The day on which this happened was a Jewish day of rest.¹⁰ So the Jewish *leaders* said to the man who had been healed, “Today is *<the Sabbath/our rest day>*, and *in our Jewish laws it is written that people should not work on our <Sabbath/rest day>*, so you should not be carrying your mat!”¹¹ The man replied to them, “The man who healed me, he himself said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk!’”¹² They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Pick it up and walk!’?”¹³ But since Jesus had disappeared in the crowd *without telling the man his name*, the man did not know who it was *who had healed him*.

John 5:14-18

THEME: *The Jewish leaders became very angry with Jesus for saying that he was the Son of God.*

¹⁴ Later, Jesus found the man when he was in the Temple *courtyard*. He *told the man his name*, and said to him, “Listen! You are healed! So stop sinning! If you do not stop sinning, something will happen to you that will be worse *than the illness you had before!*”¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jewish *leaders* [SYN] that it was Jesus who had healed him.¹⁶ So the Jewish *leaders* [SYN] started to harass Jesus, because Jesus was doing these things *<on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day>*.¹⁷ Then Jesus replied to them, “My Father has always been working every day, *including <the Sabbath/the day of rest>*, up until now. I am doing the same thing!”¹⁸ The Jewish *leaders* [SYN] *considered* that he was disobeying their rules about *<the Sabbath/the day of rest>*, and that by saying that God was his Father, he was making himself equal with God. *And they considered that both these things were grounds for killing him*. So they sought even harder for a way to kill him.

John 5:19-45

THEME: *Jesus replied to their objections by stating five reasons why they should believe that he is the Son of God.*

¹⁹ Jesus replied to them by saying, “You need to know this: I can do nothing by my own *authority*. I do only the *kind of* things that I see *my* Father doing. Whatever kinds of things my Father is doing, those are the things I am doing.²⁰ My Father loves me, and he shows me everything that he is doing. He will show me *the miracles that he wants me to do* that will be greater than the ones that *you have already seen me do*, so that you may be amazed.²¹ *For example*, just like my Father causes people who have died to rise up and be alive again, I will give *eternal* life to everyone that I want to.²² Furthermore, *my* Father is not the one who judges people *concerning their sins*. Instead, he has given to me the work of judging people,²³ in order that all people may honor me, just like they honor *my* Father. *My* Father *considers that* anyone who does not honor me is not honoring *him*, the one who sent me.²⁴ Listen to this carefully: Those who hear my message and believe that *God* is the one who sent me have eternal life. *God will not <condemn them/say that he will punish them>*. They are no longer separated from God. Instead, they have *eternal* life.

²⁵ “Listen to this carefully: There will be a time when those who are *<spiritually dead/separated from God>* will hear the voice of me, *<the Son of God/the man who is also God>*. In fact, it is that time already. Those who hear *and pay attention to my message* will have *eternal* life.²⁶ *My* Father has *power to* make things live. Similarly, he has given me the *power to enable* people to live *eternally*.²⁷ Because I am the one who came from heaven, he has given me the authority to judge people *concerning their sins*.²⁸ Do not be surprised about that, because there will be a time when all people who have died will hear my voice²⁹ and they will become alive again. Those who have lived good *lives* will rise *from their graves* and live forever. But those who have lived evil lives will rise, and I will *<condemn them/declare that I will punish them for their sins>*.³⁰ I do not do anything *like that* by my own authority. I judge people only according to what I hear *my* Father *tell me*. I will judge people fairly, because I do not want to please only myself. Instead, I want to please *my* Father, who sent me.

³¹ “If I were the *only* one to tell people about myself, *people could rightly say that* what I say is not true.³² But there is someone else who tells people about me. And I know that what he tells people about me is true.³³ As for you, when you sent messengers to John *the Baptizer to ask about me*, he told the truth *about me*.³⁴ I do not *need that* people tell others *about me*. But instead, I am reminding *you about what John told people about me*, in order that you will *believe it and be saved* {*God will save you*}.³⁵ *John’s message about me* (OR, *John*) [MET] was *like* a lamp that shines brightly. For a short while you were willing to be made happy *by that message* {to let *that message* make you happy}.

³⁶ “But there is something else that tells you about me. *It should prove who I am* more than what John *said about me*. The miracles [PRS] that *my* Father told me to do, the miracles that I am performing, show (OR, prove) to people that my Father sent me.³⁷ Furthermore, *my* Father, who sent me, tells people about me. You have never heard his voice or seen him.³⁸ Furthermore, you have not believed in *me*, the one he sent. So you have not *believed* his message in your inner beings.³⁹ You carefully study (OR, Study) the Scriptures, because you think that by *studying* them you will *find the way to* have eternal life. And those Scriptures tell people about me!⁴⁰ But you refuse *<to come to me/to believe my message>* in order that you may have *eternal* life.

⁴¹ “It does not *matter to* me whether people praise me.⁴² But you *want people to praise you*. I know that within yourselves you do not love God.⁴³ Although I have come to earth with my Father’s authority [MTY], you do not accept me. But if someone else comes with his own authority [MTY], you accept *him!*⁴⁴ You accept your praising each other, but you do not try to do things that will result in God himself praising you. So *<there is no way you can believe in me/how can you believe my message?>* [RHQ]

⁴⁵ But do not think that I am the one who will accuse you while *my* Father is listening! No, it is Moses who will accuse you! You thought that he would *defend* you. ⁴⁶ Moses wrote about me, so if you had believed what **he** wrote, you would have believed what I said! ⁴⁷ But because you did not believe what he wrote *about me*, <you will certainly not believe what I say!/how will you believe what I say?> [RHQ]”

John 6:1-15

THEME: *Jesus miraculously fed more than 5,000 people.*

6 ¹ Some time later, *when Jesus was in Galilee district*, near the time of the Jewish Passover celebration, Jesus went *with us disciples by boat* and crossed to *another place along Galilee Lake*. This lake is *also called Tiberias Lake*. ² A large crowd of people kept following him *on land* because they had been seeing the miracles he performed *by healing* sick people. ³ Jesus went up on the hillside and sat down with *us disciples to teach us*. ⁴ Then he looked up and saw a great crowd of people coming toward him. ⁵ He said to Philip, “Where will we buy food for all these people to eat?” ⁶ He asked this only to find out if Philip believed what *Jesus could do*, because Jesus already knew what **he himself** was going to do. ⁷ Philip replied to him, “*Even if we had* the amount of money a man earns in eight months, that would not be enough to buy bread so that each person could have a little bit!” ⁸ Another one of *us* disciples, Andrew, who was Simon Peter’s *younger* brother, said to him, ⁹ “There is a boy here who has five small barley loaves and two *cooked* fish. But <they will not help much among so many people!/what good will that do among so many people?> [RHQ]” ¹⁰ Jesus said, “Tell the people to sit down!” There was plenty of grass there, so they all sat down. There were about five thousand men *among those* who sat down. ¹¹ Then Jesus took the small loaves and the fish and thanked *God* for them. Then he *gave them to us, and we* distributed the small loaves and the fish to all the people sitting on the ground. *Because God caused the food to keep increasing*, everyone ate as much as they wanted. ¹² When everyone had all the food they wanted, he said to *us* disciples, “Gather up the pieces that are left over. Do not let anything be wasted!” ¹³ So we gathered up the pieces of the small loaves that were left over by those who had eaten. We filled twelve baskets with those pieces!

¹⁴ After the people saw that miracle that Jesus had performed, *many of* them started to say, “Surely this is the prophet *like Moses* that *God promised* to send to the world!” ¹⁵ So, because Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him to make him *their* king, he left them again and went up into the hills by himself.

John 6:16-24

THEME: *Jesus miraculously walked on the water.*

¹⁶ When it was evening, *we* disciples went down to *Galilee Lake*. ¹⁷ When it became dark and Jesus had still not joined us, we got into a boat and went across the lake towards Capernaum city. ¹⁸ A strong wind started to blow and caused the water <to become very rough/to have high waves>. ¹⁹ After we had rowed <three or four miles/five or six kilometers>, we saw Jesus coming near the boat; he was walking on the water! So we were terrified! ²⁰ But he said to us, “Do not be afraid! It is I!” ²¹ We were glad to take him into the boat. As soon as *we* did that, the boat reached the shore where *we* were going!

²² The next day the crowd of people that had stayed on the other side of the lake *were perplexed about how Jesus had left that area*. They knew that there had been only one boat there *the previous day*. They knew that we had gone away in it by ourselves. They knew that Jesus had not gone with us. ²³ Then some *men came* from Tiberias city in boats. *They were hoping to take some of the crowd back to Tiberias*. They arrived near the place where the people had eaten the food after Jesus had given thanks *and caused it to multiply*. ²⁴ When the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor we disciples were there, *some of* them got into those boats and they sailed to Capernaum to find Jesus.

John 6:25-59

THEME: *Jesus taught them figuratively of the need for them to take for themselves the benefits of his sacrificing himself and shedding his blood to atone for their sins.*

²⁵ When they found him *in Capernaum* further around the lake, they asked him, “Teacher, *since you(sg) did not come in a boat*, when *and how* did you get here?” ²⁶ Jesus replied to them, “Listen to this carefully: Do you know why you are looking for me? It is not because you saw *me perform* miracles *and as a result have realized who I really am*. No! You are looking for me *only* because you had plenty of bread to eat *after I provided it for you by performing a miracle*. ²⁷ Stop desiring food that will soon spoil! Instead, desire to get *spiritual* food that will last forever! Yearn for eternal life! That is what I, the one who came from heaven, will give you. God *my* Father has shown that he approves of me *doing that*.”

²⁸ Then the people asked him, “What things should we do *to please* God?” ²⁹ Jesus replied, “What God *wants you* to do is this: He wants you to believe that *I am* the one he has sent.” ³⁰ So they said to him, “Then perform *another* miracle so that we may see it and believe that *you came from God*. What miracle would you like to perform?” ³¹ Our ancestors ate the *food called manna* that *God provided for them by a miracle* in the desolate area. This is written {*The Psalmist wrote this*} *in the Scriptures* about *what Moses caused to happen*: ‘He gave them food from heaven to eat.’ *Will you perform a miracle like that?*”

³² So Jesus said to them, “The truth is that it was not Moses who gave your *ancestors* that food from heaven. No, it was my Father *who gave it to them*. And my Father is the one who gives you the true food from heaven. ³³ The true bread from God came down from heaven, and he is the one who will give *eternal life to the people of the world* [MTY].”

³⁴ *Not understanding what he meant*, they said to him, “Sir, give us that kind of bread **all the time!**” ³⁵ Jesus said to them, “Just like food [MET] sustains physical life, I am the one who enables you to have spiritual life. Those who eat ordinary food and drinks will later be hungry and thirsty. But those who come to me to receive that life will never again lack anything spiritually. ³⁶ I told you before that you have seen my miracles, but after seeing them, instead of understanding who I am, you have not believed in me. ³⁷ All the people that my Father entrusts to me will come to me, and I will certainly <welcome/never send away> [LIT] anyone who comes to me. ³⁸ When I came down from heaven, it was not to do what I wanted. Instead, I came to do what <God/my Father>, who sent me, wanted. ³⁹ What the one who sent me wanted was that I would <keep forever all/never lose any> [LIT] of those whom he entrusted to me. He wanted me to cause all of them to become alive again <on the last day/on the day when I judge everyone> [MTY]. ⁴⁰ Long ago in the desolate area when those who were bitten by snakes looked at the bronze replica of a snake, they were healed [MET]. What my Father wants is that similarly everyone who looks at what I have done and believes in me will have eternal life. I will cause them to become alive again <on the last day/on the day when I judge everyone> [MTY].”

⁴¹ The Jewish leaders [SYN] began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the one who is like true bread who came down from heaven.” ⁴² They said, “<This man is Jesus, the son of Joseph!/Isn’t this man the son of Joseph?> [RHQ] We know the names of both his father and his mother. He certainly did not come from heaven, so <he is lying by saying ‘I came from heaven.’/why is he now saying, ‘I came from heaven?’> [RHQ]” ⁴³ Jesus replied to them, “Stop grumbling among yourselves about what I just said! ⁴⁴ My Father, who sent me, makes people want to come to me. No others will come to me to receive eternal life. Those who come to me are the only ones who will believe in me. I will <cause them to be alive again/raise them from the dead> <on the last day/on the judgment day>. ⁴⁵ It was written <by one of the prophets/by the prophet Isaiah> {<One of the prophets/The prophet Isaiah> wrote} about all those who will trust in me, ‘God will teach them all.’ Everyone who listens to what my Father says and learns from him will <come to/believe in> me. ⁴⁶ I came from God. I am the only one who has seen my Father. No one else has seen him. ⁴⁷ Listen to this carefully: Everyone who believes <my message/in me> has eternal life. ⁴⁸ Just like food [MET] sustains your physical life, I am the one who enables you to have spiritual life. ⁴⁹ Even though your ancestors ate the manna while they were traveling in the desolate area, they died anyway. ⁵⁰ But the bread I am talking about is something that came down from heaven. If people eat that bread, their spirits will never die. ⁵¹ I am the one who came down from heaven to enable people to have spiritual life. If people take what I will give them, they will live forever. What I will give them is my flesh, which I will give to all the people in [MTY] the world in order that they may have spiritual life.”

⁵² Then the Jewish leaders [SYN] began to argue among themselves. They said, “<There is no way this man can give us his flesh to eat!/How can this man give us his flesh to eat?>” [RHQ] ⁵³ So, speaking figuratively of the need for them to accept for themselves the benefits of his sacrificing himself and shedding his blood to atone for their sins [MET], Jesus said to them, “Listen carefully to this: Although I am the one who came from heaven, if you do not eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will not have eternal life. ⁵⁴ Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will cause them to become alive again at <the last day/the judgment day>, ⁵⁵ because my flesh and my blood are truly spiritual food. ⁵⁶ Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood will have a close relationship with me, and I will have a close relationship with them. ⁵⁷ My Father, who is the source of everything that lives, sent me, and I live because my Father has given me life. Similarly those who eat my flesh will live eternally because of what I do for them. ⁵⁸ I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Although our ancestors ate manna, they later died anyway. But those who eat this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹ He said this while he was teaching people in <the synagogue/the Jewish meeting place> in Capernaum.

John 6:60-71

THEME: *Some of Jesus’ disciples left him because of this teaching.*

⁶⁰ After they heard him say that, many of his disciples said, “What he is teaching is hard to understand; <it is very difficult for anyone to accept it!/how can anyone accept it?> [RHQ]” ⁶¹ Jesus was aware that his disciples were grumbling about it, so he said to them, “<I am sorry that this is offending you./Is this offending you?> [RHQ]” ⁶² <Perhaps you will believe my message if you see me, the one who came from heaven, ascending there to where I was before!/What will you think if you see me, the one who came from heaven, ascending there to where I was before?> [RHQ]” ⁶³ God’s Spirit is the one who gives people eternal life. Human efforts are no help at all for giving people eternal life. The message I have spoken to you gives spiritual life (OR, comes from God’s Spirit and gives eternal life.) ⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe my message.” Jesus said that because he knew from the time he started [MTY] his ministry which of them would not believe his message. He also knew who would <betray him/enable his enemies to seize him>.

⁶⁵ Then he continued by saying, “That is why I told you that only those whom my Father has enabled to believe in me will come to me and receive eternal life.”

⁶⁶ From that time, many of his disciples left him and no longer went with him. ⁶⁷ So he said to us twelve apostles, “You do not want to leave me also, do you?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter replied to him, “Lord, we will not leave you, because <there is no other person like you to whom we can go!/what other person is there like you to whom we can go?> [RHQ] You have the message about eternal life! ⁶⁹ We have come to believe for certain that you are the holy one who has come from God!”

⁷⁰ Then Jesus replied to us, “You are saying that as though all you twelve men whom I have chosen [RHQ] believe that. But

one of you is *under the control of Satan!*" ⁷¹ He was talking about Judas, the son of Simon, from Kerioth village. *Even though Judas was one of us twelve apostles, he was about <to betray Jesus/to enable Jesus' enemies to seize him>.*

John 7:1-9

THEME: *Jesus rejected his younger brothers' suggestion that he go immediately to Jerusalem.*

7 ¹ After those things happened, Jesus went around in Galilee province. He did not want to travel in Judea province, because he knew that the Jewish *leaders there* were wanting to kill him. ² But when the time of the Jewish celebration called 'Celebration of Living in Shelters' was near, ³ Jesus' younger brothers said to him, "*Since many people here have left you, you should leave and go to Judea province and perform some miracles there, so that your disciples may see them!*" ⁴ No one who wants to become famous does things secretly. *You say you are doing these miracles, so do some miracles there so that everyone [MTY] can see them!*" ⁵ *They said this critically, because even though they were his own younger brothers, they did not believe he was from God.* ⁶ So Jesus said to them, "It is not yet time for me [MTY] to go to the celebration. For you, any time is right to go to the celebration. ⁷ *The people [MTY] who <do not believe in me/do not belong to God> cannot hate you, but they hate me because I tell them that what they are doing is evil.* ⁸ *You(pl) go ahead to the celebration. I am not going up to Jerusalem to the celebration yet, because now is not the right time for me to go.*" ⁹ After he said that, Jesus stayed a little longer in Galilee.

John 7:10-13

THEME: *Jesus went to the celebration.*

¹⁰ However, a few days after his younger brothers left to go up to the celebration, he went also. He went, along with us disciples, but no others went with us. ¹¹ At the celebration, the Jewish *leaders* were looking for him. They were asking people, "Has Jesus come?" ¹² Among the crowds, many people were whispering about Jesus. Some were saying, "He is a good man!" But others were saying instead, "No! He is deceiving the crowds!" ¹³ But no one was speaking so that others could hear them, because they were afraid of the Jewish *leaders* [SYN].

John 7:14-36

THEME: *After Jesus taught people, the Jewish leaders wanted to arrest him, but many others believed he was the Messiah.*

¹⁴ In the middle of the days of the celebration, Jesus went to the Temple courtyard and began to teach people. ¹⁵ The Jewish *elders* were amazed at what he was saying. They said, "This man never studied in one of our religious schools! So <how can he have learned so much about Scripture?/it is difficult for us to believe that he has learned so much about Scripture!> [RHQ]" ¹⁶ Jesus replied to them, "What I teach does not come from myself. It comes from God, the one who sent me. ¹⁷ Those who choose to do what God wants will find out whether what I teach comes from God or whether I am speaking with *only my own authority*. ¹⁸ Those who speak with *only their own authority* do that *only* so that others will honor them. But I am *doing things so that others* will honor the one who sent me, and I am someone who speaks the truth. I never lie. ¹⁹ *Think about the laws that Moses gave you* [RHQ]. None of you *completely* obeys those laws. So why are you trying to kill me, saying *I do not obey the laws concerning <the Sabbath/the Jewish day of rest>?*"

²⁰ Someone in the crowd answered, "By saying this you show that you are crazy (OR, A demon is controlling you)! Certainly no one is trying to kill you!" ²¹ Jesus replied to them, "Because I did a miracle of *healing someone* <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day>, you are all shocked. ²² Moses gave you a law that you must circumcise the male children and that you must do that exactly seven days after they are born. *Actually*, it was your ancestors, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, not Moses, who started that ritual. But because of that law, you sometimes circumcise them <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day>, but that is working, too! ²³ You sometimes circumcise boys <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day> so that the law of Moses is not disobeyed {you do not disobey the law of Moses}, so <it is ridiculous that you are angry with me, saying I worked <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day> by healing a man!/why are you angry with me, saying I worked <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day> by healing a man?> [RHQ] *Healing someone is far more helpful than circumcising a baby boy!*" ²⁴ Stop deciding whether my healing this man is wrong according to what you see! Instead, decide according to what is really the right action to help people!"

²⁵ Some of the people from Jerusalem were saying, "<This is the man that they are trying to kill!/Isn't this the man that they are trying to kill?> [RHQ]" ²⁶ He is saying these things <publicly/in front of many people>, but our Jewish rulers are not saying anything to oppose him. Is that because they have decided that he is truly <the Messiah/God's chosen king>? ²⁷ But he can not be the Messiah, because we know where this man came from. When the Messiah really comes, no one will know where he comes from."

²⁸ They said that because they thought Jesus was born in Nazareth. So while Jesus was teaching people in the Temple courtyard, he shouted, "Yes, you say that you know me, and you think you know [IRO] where I am from. But I have come here not <because I appointed myself/with my own authority>. Instead, God is the one who truly sent me. You do not know him. ²⁹ But I know him, because I have come from him. He is the one who sent me!"

³⁰ Then they tried to seize him because he said that he had come from God. But no one put their hands on him to do that, because it was not yet the time [MTY] for him to die. ³¹ But many of the crowd believed that he had come from God. They

said, “When the Messiah comes, he certainly will not do more miracles than this man has done, will he?”³² The Pharisees heard them whispering these things about him. So they and the chief priests sent some Temple guards to seize him.

³³ Then Jesus said, “I will be with you for only a short time. Then I will return to the one who sent me.”³⁴ Then you will search for me, but you will not find me. And you will not be able to come to the place where I am.”³⁵ So the Jewish *leaders* [SYN] said to themselves, “Where is this man about to go with the result that we will not be able to find him? *Some Jewish people have dispersed and live among Greek people.* He is not intending to go *and live among them* and teach **them**, is he?”³⁶ When he said ‘You will search for me, but you will not be able to find me,’ and when he said ‘You will not be able to come to the place where I am,’ what *did he mean?*”

John 7:37-53

THEME: *Many people were divided after Jesus said that the Spirit would produce eternal life within those who come to him.*

³⁷ On each of the seven days of the celebration, the high priest poured out some water on the altar in the Temple to remember how God provided water for the people in the desolate area long ago. But the water he poured did not help anyone who was thirsty. So on the last day of the festival, which was the most important day, Jesus stood up in the Temple courtyard and said with a loud voice, “Those who are thirsty should come to me to drink *what I will give them.*”³⁸ Just like the Scriptures teach, streams of water shall flow out from the inner beings of those who believe in me, and that water will cause them to live *eternally.*³⁹ When Jesus said that, he was referring to God’s Spirit, whom those who believed in Jesus would receive later. Up to that time God had not sent the Spirit *to live within believers*, because Jesus had not yet *died and returned to his glorious home in heaven, from where he would send the Spirit.*

⁴⁰ When some of the crowd heard those words, they said, “Surely this man is the prophet *whom God promised to send who would be like Moses!*”⁴¹ Others said, “He is the Messiah!” But others, *thinking Jesus was born in Galilee*, said, “The Messiah will not come from Galilee *province*, will he?”⁴² <Did a prophet not write in the Scriptures that the Messiah will come from King David’s family, and be born in Bethlehem, where King David lived?/It is written in the Scriptures that the Messiah will come from King David’s family, and be born in Bethlehem, where King David lived!> [RHQ]⁴³ So the people were divided because of *what they thought about Jesus.*⁴⁴ Some people wanted to seize him, but no one laid hands on him *to do that.*

⁴⁵ So the Temple guards returned to the chief priests and the Pharisees, *the ones who had sent them to arrest Jesus.* They said to the guards, “Why did you not *seize him and bring him here?*”⁴⁶ They replied, “No one ever spoke such *amazing things* as this man does!”⁴⁷ Then the Pharisees replied, “Have you been deceived {Has he deceived you}, too?”⁴⁸ <None of our rulers nor any of us Pharisees have believed that <he is the Messiah!/he came from God!>/Have any of our Jewish rulers or any of us Pharisees believed that <he is the Messiah!/he came from God?>> [RHQ]⁴⁹ Not one! But, on the contrary, some of this crowd *have believed in him.* They do not know *the true teachings of our laws!* They will go to hell *for listening to him!*”

⁵⁰ Then Nicodemus spoke. He was the one who earlier went to Jesus *at night.* He was also a member of the Jewish Council. He said to *the rest of the council members,*⁵¹ “We have not listened to what he says to find out what he is doing. <It is not permitted in our Jewish law [PRS] for us to say, before questioning someone, that we must punish him!/Is it permitted in our Jewish law [PRS] for us to say, before questioning someone, that we must punish him?> [RHQ]”⁵² They replied to him, “<Are you another *disgusting person* from Galilee?/You talk like another *disgusting person* from Galilee!> [RHQ] Read *what they have written in the Scriptures!* You will find that no prophet comes from Galilee *province, like he does!*”⁵³ Then they all left and went to their own homes.

John 8:1-11

THEME: *Jesus evaded a trap about condemning a woman who had been caught committing adultery.*

8¹ But Jesus went *with us disciples* to Olive Tree Hill and we stayed near there that night.² Early the next morning, we returned to the Temple courtyard. Many people gathered around him, so he sat down to teach them.³ Then men who taught the Jewish laws and some of [SYN] the Pharisee *religious group* brought a woman to him. She was seized {They had arranged to seize her} while she was having sex with a man who was not her husband. They made her stand up in front of the group *that was listening to Jesus.*⁴ Then they said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was seized {we seized this woman} while she was having sex with a man who is not her husband.⁵ Moses commanded us in the laws that *he gave us* that we should throw stones at such women *and kill them.* So what do you say *we should do?*”⁶ They asked this question as a trap so that they could accuse him. *If he said that they should not kill her, they would shame him for disobeying the law of Moses. If he said that they should kill her, they could accuse him to the Roman governor.*

But Jesus bent down and wrote something on the ground with his finger.⁷ While they continued to question him, he stood up and said to them, “Whichever one of you has never sinned can be the first one to start throwing stones at her.”⁸ Then he stooped down and wrote *some more* on the ground.⁹ After they heard what he said, those *who were questioning him*

^e Some of the oldest Greek manuscripts do not include the sentences that are now marked as 7:53-8:11. Some manuscripts have those sentences at the end of John’s Gospel and others have them at the end of Luke’s Gospel.

went away, one by one, the older ones first *and then the younger ones, knowing they were all sinners*. Finally only Jesus was there, along with the woman. ¹⁰ Jesus stood up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one said you must die for your sin?” ¹¹ She said, “No, sir, no one.” Then Jesus said, “I do not condemn you either. Go *home* now, and do not continue your sinful *life* any longer!”]

John 8:12-20

THEME: *Jesus replied to the Pharisees’ objection to his claim to be like a light for the people of the world.*

¹² Jesus spoke to the people again. He said, “I am *like* a light [MET] for *all the people in* [MTY] the world. *Just like a light reveals what has been in the darkness* [MET], *I reveal God’s truth to them*. Those who walk in the darkness *are unaware of what is around them*. But those who become my disciples will always be aware of *God’s truth* [MET]. They will have my light *which shows them how to have eternal life*.” ¹³ So the Pharisees said to him, “You are just telling about yourself! *Since there is no one else to verify these things that you say about yourself, we do not need to accept that what you say is true.*”

¹⁴ Jesus replied, “Even if I were the *only one* to say these things about myself, what I say is true, because I know that I came from *heaven*, and I know that I am going *back to heaven*. But **you** do not know where I came from or where I am going. ¹⁵ **You** judge people according to human standards. *The reason that I am here is not <to condemn people/to say that I will punish people> for their sins.* ¹⁶ But if I did judge *people*, what I decided would be correct, because I am not the *only one who will decide those things*. I and the one who sent me will both decide. ¹⁷ It is written {Moses wrote} in your law that if *at least two people testify that some event has happened, people should consider that what they say is true.* ¹⁸ I am telling you about myself, and the other one who is telling you about me is *my Father* who sent me. *So you should believe that what we declare is true.*”

¹⁹ Then they asked him, “*If you have a father whom we can question about you, where is he?*” Jesus replied, “You do not know *who I really am*. If you knew who I *really am*, you would know who my Father is also.” ²⁰ He said these things when he was in the Temple *courtyard*, near the place where the people put their offerings. *This was also very close to the place where the Jewish Council met*. But no one seized him to arrest him, because it was not yet time [MTY] *for him to suffer and die*.

John 8:21-30

THEME: *Jesus replied to the Pharisees’ continued rejection of Jesus’ claims about himself.*

²¹ Jesus also said to them, “*I will soon be going away. Then at the end of your life you will seek me, but you will die without God forgiving your sins. Where I will go, you will not be able to come.*” ²² So the Jewish *leaders* said among themselves, “Is he going to kill himself? Is that the reason that he said, ‘Where I go, you will not be able to come?’” ²³ But Jesus continued by saying to them, “You were born here in this world, but I came from heaven. You belong to those who are opposed to God [MTY]. I do not belong to them. ²⁴ I told you that you will die *without God forgiving your sins*. If you do not believe that I am *who I say that I am*, you will die *without God forgiving your sins*.”

²⁵ So they said to him, “You! Who do you think you are?” Jesus said to them, “Ever since I began *teaching*, I have been telling you who I am! ²⁶ I could judge you and say that *you are guilty of many things*. But instead, *I will say only what the one who sent me tells me to say. What he says is true, and I tell the people in the world* [MTY] what I have heard from him.”

²⁷ They did not understand that he was talking about his Father *in heaven*. ²⁸ So Jesus said, “I am the one who came down from heaven, but when you lift me up *on a cross to kill me*, you will know who I am. You will also know that I do not do anything with my own *authority*. Instead, I say just what *my Father* has taught me. ²⁹ He is the one who sent me, and he helps me. Because I always do the things that please him, he has never abandoned me.” ³⁰ As Jesus was saying these things, many people believed that he was *<from God/the Messiah>*.

John 8:31-59

THEME: *Jesus told his critics which people were true believers like Abraham and which ones really were serving Satan.*

³¹ Then Jesus said to the Jews who now *said they* believed in him, “If you continue to *live in accordance with my message*, you will truly be my disciples. ³² Then you will know *God’s truth*, and as a result of *your believing his truth*, he [PRS] will free you *from being controlled by the one who has made you his slaves*.” ³³ They replied to him, “We are descendants of Abraham. We have never been anyone’s slaves. So why do you say *we will be freed from being someone’s slaves?*”

³⁴ Jesus replied, “Listen carefully to what I am going to tell you. All those who continue to sin are *forced to obey* their sinful desires [MET], *just like a slave is forced to obey his master*. ³⁵ A slave is not a permanent member of a family. But a son is a member of a family forever. *Similarly, you say you are members of God’s family because you are descendants of Abraham, but really, because you are like slaves of your sinful desires, you are no longer permanent members of God’s family.* ³⁶ So if you allow me to free you, you will truly be free. ³⁷ I know that you are Abraham’s descendants. But you are trying to kill me because *you are not allowing* [PRS] my message to continue *to change* your inner being. ³⁸ I am telling you what I saw when I was with *my Father*. But **you** do the things that you have heard from **your father**.”

³⁹ They replied to him, “Abraham is our ancestor.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s descendants, *your character would be like Abraham’s character, and you would do good things like Abraham did.* ⁴⁰ I have been telling you the truth that

I heard from God, but you are trying to kill me. Abraham did not do things like that. ⁴¹No! You are doing the things that your *real* father does.”

They said to him, “*We do not know about you, but we* are not illegitimate children. And *spiritually*, we have only one Father. That is God, and you don’t know who your father is!” ⁴²Jesus said to them, “If God were your father, you would love me, because I came from God, and now I have come here to *this world*. My coming was not *because I appointed myself/with my own authority*”. He sent me. ⁴³“And I will tell you why you do not understand what I say./Do you know why you do not understand what I say?” [RHQ] It is because you do not want to accept my message. ⁴⁴You belong to your father, *the devil/Satan*, and you desire to do what he wants. He has *caused people to become* murderers from the time when *people* first *sinned*. He has abandoned *God’s truth* because he is a liar by his nature. Whenever he lies, he is speaking according to his *nature*, because he is a liar and is the one who originates [MET] all lies. ⁴⁵But because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me! ⁴⁶*Since I have never sinned*, *none of you can show that I have sinned./can anyone among you show that I have sinned?* [RHQ] So, since I tell you the truth, *there is no good reason for your not believing me!/why is it that you do not believe me?* [RHQ] ⁴⁷Those who belong to God habitually obey God’s message. You do not belong to God, so you do not obey his message.”

⁴⁸The Jewish *leaders* [SYN] replied to him, “*We are certainly right by saying that you believe what is false as the Samaritans do!/Are we not right by saying that you believe what is false as the Samaritans do?* [RHQ] And that *a demon/an evil spirit controls you!*” ⁴⁹Jesus replied, “A demon does not *control* me! I honor my Father, and you do not honor me! ⁵⁰I am not trying to honor myself. There is someone else who desires to *honor me*, and he is the one who will judge *whether it is I who am telling the truth or whether it is you who are telling the truth*. ⁵¹But the truth is that anyone who obeys what I say will never die!”

⁵²Then the Jewish *leaders* [SYN], *thinking that he was talking about ordinary death and not about spiritual death*, said to him, “Now we are sure that a demon *controls* you! Abraham and the prophets died *long ago!* But you say that anyone who obeys what you teach will never die! ⁵³“You are certainly not greater than our ancestor Abraham!/Do you think you are greater than our ancestor Abraham?” [RHQ] He died, and all the prophets died, so who do you think you are *by saying something like that?*” ⁵⁴Jesus replied, “If I were honoring myself, that would be worthless. My Father is the one who you say is your God. He is the one who honors me. ⁵⁵Although you do not know him, I know him *and have a close relationship with him*. If I said that I did not know him, I would be a liar like you are. But I know him, and I obey what he says. ⁵⁶Your ancestor Abraham was happy when he thought about what I would *do during* my life [MTY]. *It was as though* he saw that, and was happy.”

⁵⁷Then the Jewish *leaders* [SYN] said to him, “You are not fifty years old yet! So *you certainly did not see him!/how could you have seen him?* [RHQ]” *Because he died long ago!*” ⁵⁸Jesus said to them, “The truth is that I existed before Abraham was born!” ⁵⁹So, *because they were very angry about Jesus thus saying that he had eternally existed/was equal with God*, they picked up stones to throw at him *to kill him*. But *Jesus* caused them not to be able to see him, and he left the Temple courtyard.

John 9:1-12

THEME: *Jesus healed a man who was born blind.*

9 ¹As Jesus walked along *with us*, he saw a man who had been blind from the time he was born. ²We disciples asked him, “Teacher, was this man blind from when he was born because his parents sinned or because he himself sinned?” ³Jesus replied, “His being blind was not because he or his parents sinned. Instead, *he has been blind* in order that *people can see* the power of God [the power of God can be seen] as a result of *what will now happen* to him. ⁴While there is still time, I must do the work that the one who sent me *wants me to do*. *Just like daytime is followed by* nighttime when people do not work, *at the end of our lives* [MET] *it is too late for us to do what God wants*. ⁵While I am still *living* in this world, I am the *one who enables people to know about God, like* [MET] a light enables the people in [MTY] this world *to see what is in the darkness*.”

⁶After he said that, he spat on the ground. He made a *little bit of* mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. ⁷Then he said to him, “Go and wash in Siloam pool!” (That name means ‘sent;’ *just like they sent the water by a channel into the pool, God sent Jesus*). So the man went and washed *in the pool*, and when he went home he was able to see! ⁸His neighbors and others who previously had seen him when he was begging said, “He is the man who used to sit here and beg, isn’t he?” ⁹Some said, “Yes, he is.” Others said, “No, *he is not*. It is *just a man who looks like him!*” But the man himself said, “Yes, I am that man!” ¹⁰So they said to him, “How is it that now you can see?” ¹¹He replied, “The man whose name is Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. Then he told me to go to Siloam *pool* and wash. So I went there and washed, and then I could see.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is that man *now?*” He said, “I do not know.”

John 9:13-41

THEME: *The Pharisees investigated the healing of the blind man.*

¹³They took to the Pharisees the man who was previously blind. ¹⁴The day on which Jesus made the mud and enabled the man to see again was a *«Sabbath/Jewish day of rest»*. *The Pharisees considered that healing someone was work, and their rules did not permit people to do any work «on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day»*. ¹⁵So the Pharisees also asked

him, "How did you become able to see?" He said to them, "The man put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I can see!"¹⁶ So some of the Pharisees said, "Since this man *Jesus* disobeys *our rules about working* <on the Sabbath/on the Jewish rest day>, he is not from God." But others said, "If he was a sinner, <he could certainly not do such miracles!/how could he do such miracles?> [RHQ]" So they were divided.¹⁷ So *one of* them said to the blind man again, "You are the man whom he enabled to see. What do you yourself say about him?" The man said, "*I think* he is a prophet!" So they told him to go.

¹⁸ The Jewish *leaders* [SYN] still did not believe that the man was blind when he was born, and that he was *now* able to see. So they sent someone to bring the man's parents.¹⁹ *When they got there*, one of the Jewish leaders asked them, "Is that man your son? Do you say that he was blind when he was born? *If that is true*, how is he now able to see?"²⁰ His parents replied, "We know that he is our son. We know that he was blind when he was born."²¹ But we do not know how he is able to see now. We also do not know who enabled him to see. Ask our son! He is old enough *to answer questions from authorities like you!* He can tell you himself!"²² The Jewish *leaders* [SYN] had previously declared that they would prevent anyone who declared that Jesus was the Messiah from *entering* their synagogues. His parents *knew that*, so they were afraid of the Jewish *leaders*. [SYN]²³ That is the reason that they said, "He is old enough *to answer questions*, so ask him!"

²⁴ So they sent someone to bring back to them the man who had been blind. *When he got there*, the Jewish *leaders* said to him, "Knowing that God *is listening* [IDM], tell the truth! We know that the man who healed you is a sinner."²⁵ He replied, "I do not know if he is a sinner or not. But one thing I do know is that I was blind, but now I can see!"²⁶ So they said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he enable you to see?"²⁷ He replied, "I told you that already, but you did not [RHQ] pay attention! Why do you want to hear me tell you again? <Do you also want to become his disciples?/You talk as though [IRO] you also want to become his disciples [RHQ]>."²⁸ Then they insulted him angrily. They said, "**You** are that man's disciple, but **we** are Moses' disciples!"²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses; but this man, we do not know where he is from or where he *gets any authority* from!"³⁰ The man replied, "That is very surprising! You *say that* you do not know where he *gets any authority*. But he enabled me to see!"³¹ We know that God does not help sinners *who ask God to help them*. Instead, he listens to *and helps* godly people who pray. He listens to people who do what God wants.³² No one has ever enabled a man to see who was blind when he was born *like I was*. That has never happened since the world began!³³ So if this man had not come from God, he would not be able to do anything *like that!*"³⁴ They replied to him, "You <were born as a *result of your parents' sin* [EUP]/bastard>! <Do you think **you** are qualified to teach **us?**/**You** are not qualified to teach **us!**> [RHQ]" Then they threw him out of the synagogue.

³⁵ Jesus heard *people* say that they had thrown that man out. He found the man and said to him, "Do you believe that the one who came down from heaven *is the Messiah?*"³⁶ The man answered, "Sir, who is he? *Tell me*, in order that I may believe in him."³⁷ Jesus said to him, "You have seen him. *In fact, it is I*, the one who am speaking to you."³⁸ The man said, "Lord, I believe that *you are the Messiah!*" Then he *knelt down before* Jesus and worshipped him.

³⁹ Jesus said, "I have come into this world to judge *the people in the world*. The result will be that *those who realize that they do not know God's truth will perceive it. That is like* [MET] *enabling* those who are blind to see. But the result will also be that people who *falsely think* [IRO] that *they understand God's truth will never understand it. That is like* [MET] *people who are blind remaining blind permanently.*"⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard him say that, and said to him, "You are not suggesting that we are *like* blind people, are you?"⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you *realized that you did not yet know God's truth, but you wanted to, then you would be like* blind people *who wanted to see. God would be able to forgive your sins. But you are now falsely* claiming that you *know God's truth, so you are like* people *who are blind who claim that they can see. Because of that, God is not able to forgive your sins.*"

John 10:1-21

THEME: *Jesus explained why he is like a good shepherd.*

10¹ *Jesus continued by saying to us*, "Listen carefully to what I say. Anyone who does not enter *the sheep pen* through the gate, if he climbs in some other way, he is a thief or a bandit."² The man who enters *the pen* through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.³ The man who watches the gate at *night* opens the gate for him. The sheep recognize the shepherd's voice. He summons his own sheep by *calling out* the names *he has given* them. Then he leads them outside *the pen*.⁴ After he has brought out all his own *sheep*, he goes in front of them. His sheep follow him because they recognize *and pay attention to* his voice.⁵ But they will never follow a stranger. Instead, they will run away from him, because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."

⁶ Jesus said that [MET] *to illustrate the difference between himself and the Pharisees, who were deceiving the people*. But they did not understand what he was telling them.⁷ So Jesus spoke to them again. He said, "Listen carefully to what I am saying. I am *like* [MET] a gate for the sheep *to enter the sheepfold, because I am the one who allows people to enter God's presence.*"⁸ All of *your religious leaders* who have come previously *without my authority* are *like* [MET] thieves and bandits *because they act violently and dishonestly for their own benefit*. But *just like* sheep do not *obey strangers, God's people do not* pay attention to them.⁹ I am *like* a gate. Those will be saved {God will save all those} who come *to God by trusting in me. Just like* sheep go in and out *through the gate safely* to find pasture [MET], *I will provide for them and protect them.*¹⁰ Thieves come *to a sheep pen* only to steal or kill or destroy *sheep* [MET]. *Similarly, your religious leaders injure God's people spiritually.* But I have come in order that people may have *eternal/spiritual* life, and that they may have abundantly *all they need to sustain them spiritually.*

¹¹“I am *like* a good shepherd. A good shepherd *is willing to die to save the sheep* [MET]. *Similarly, I am ready to sacrifice myself to save those who belong to me.* ¹²A worker whom someone has hired *to look after the sheep* is not *like* the shepherd or the one who owns the sheep. So when he sees a wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock of sheep and *seizes one sheep and causes the others to scatter.* ¹³The worker runs away because he is *only* a man whom someone has hired. He is not *really* concerned about *what happens to the sheep* [MET]. *Similarly, your religious teachers do not really care what happens to you.* ¹⁴I am *like* a good shepherd. *Just like a good shepherd knows his sheep* [MET], I know those who belong to me, and they know me ¹⁵in the same way as *my Father knows me* and I know *my Father*. Furthermore, I am *ready to sacrifice myself for those who belong to me.* ¹⁶And I have other people *who are not Jews who will some day belong to me.* They will be *like* [MET] sheep from another sheep pen. I must bring them *to God/myself* also. They will pay attention to what I say, and eventually *all those who belong to me will be like one flock, and I will be like* [MET] their one shepherd. ¹⁷The reason *my Father loves me* is that I will sacrifice my life. But *after I do that*, I will become alive again. ¹⁸No one is causing me to die. Instead, I *have chosen to sacrifice myself.* I have authority to sacrifice myself and I have authority to become alive again. That is what my Father has commanded me to do.”

¹⁹After hearing these words *that Jesus said*, the Jews were divided again. ²⁰Many of them said, “A demon is *controlling him* and has caused him to become crazy. <It is useless to listen to him!/Why should we listen to him?> [RHQ]” ²¹But others said, “What he is saying is not something a man whom a demon is controlling would say. <No demon could enable a blind man to see *like he did!*/How could a demon enable a blind man to see *like he did?*> [RHQ]”

John 10:22-42

THEME: *The Jewish leaders tried to kill or arrest Jesus for claiming that he was equal with God.*

²²Then it was time for the celebration *to remember when our ancestors rededicated the Temple in Jerusalem.* It was in winter. ²³Jesus was in the Temple *courtyard*, walking in *the place that people called King Solomon's porch.* ²⁴The Jewish leaders [SYN] gathered around him and said, “How long will you keep us from knowing for sure *if you are the Messiah?* If you are the Messiah, tell us clearly!” ²⁵Jesus answered them, “I have told you *that I am the Messiah*, but you do not believe me! You should know who I am because of the miracles I do with my Father's authority [MTY]. ²⁶But instead, you do not believe in me because you do not belong to me. *You are like* [MET] sheep *who belong to a different shepherd.* ²⁷*Just like sheep* heed the voice of *their true shepherd* [MET], *my people pay attention to what I say.* I know them, and they have become my disciples. ²⁸I will give them eternal life. No one will separate them from me, not ever. No one shall ever pull them away from belonging to me. ²⁹*Those that my Father has given to me are more precious than anything else (OR, My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than anything that opposes them).* So no one can pull them away from belonging to him [MTY]. ³⁰*My father and I are equal.*”

³¹The Jewish leaders [SYN] again picked up stones to throw at him *and kill him because they were angry at his saying that he was equal with God.* ³²But Jesus said to them, “You have seen me perform many miracles that my Father *told me to do.* *You should realize from seeing them that I am equal with God.* So because of which of these miracles [IRO] are you wanting to *kill me by* throwing stones at me?” ³³The Jewish leaders [SYN] replied, “We are *wanting to* throw stones at you not because you performed a great miracle. Instead, *we are wanting to do it* because you are dishonoring God. You are just a man, but you are saying that you are God!” ³⁴Jesus replied to them, “In the Scriptures it is written {<*someone/the Psalmist*> has written} [RHQ] *what God said to the rulers whom he had appointed, 'I have said that you are like gods.'* ³⁵God said that *to those leaders when he appointed them. No one objected to that.* And nothing that is in Scripture can be set aside {no one can set aside anything that is in Scripture}. ³⁶But I am the one *my Father set apart to completely belong to him.* He sent me here into this world. So <why are you angry with me for saying that *I am equal with God when I say that I am the Son of God?*/you should not be angry with me for saying that *I am equal with God when I say that I am the person who is both God and man!*> [RHQ] ³⁷If I were not doing the miracles that my Father *told me to do, I would not expect you to believe in me.* ³⁸But because I perform these miracles, believe *what these miracles show about me*, even though you do not believe what I say. If you do that, then you will know and understand that *my Father has a close relationship with me, and I have a close relationship with my Father.*”

³⁹After they heard that, they tried to seize him again, but he got away from them.

⁴⁰Then Jesus went, along *with us*, back across *to the east side of the Jordan River.* We went to the place where John was previously baptizing *people.* He/We stayed there *for a few weeks.* ⁴¹Many people came to him. They were saying, “John never performed a miracle, *but this man has performed many miracles!* Everything that John said about this man is true!”

⁴²Many people *who came there believed* <*that he was the Messiah/that he truly had come from God*>.

John 11:1-16

THEME: *Jesus' friend, Lazarus, died.*

11 ¹*One time* there was a man whose name was Lazarus who was *very sick.* He lived in Bethany *village*, where his *older sisters Mary and Martha lived.* ²Mary was the woman who *later poured perfume on the feet of the Lord Jesus*, and then wiped his feet with her hair. ³So the two sisters sent *someone to tell Jesus about Lazarus*, saying, ‘Lord, the one you love *very much* is very sick.’ ⁴*They hoped that Jesus would come*, but when Jesus heard the message, he said, “The *purpose of his being sick* is not that he would die. Instead, the purpose is *that people may realize how great God is*, and

that I, God's son, may be honored {that people may honor me, God's son}, because of *what I will do*.”⁵ Jesus loved Martha and her *younger* sister Mary and Lazarus.⁶ But when Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed *where he was* for two more days.

⁷ Then he said to us disciples, “Let’s go back to Judea.”⁸ We said, “Teacher, just a short while ago the Jewish leaders [SYN] wanted to *kill you* by throwing stones at you. So *we think that you should not* go back there again!*are you sure that you want to go back there again?*” [RHQ]⁹ *To show us that nothing bad could happen to him until the time that God had chosen* [MET], Jesus replied, “There are [RHQ] twelve hours in the daytime, *which is enough time to do what God wants us to do*. People who walk in the daytime will not stumble *over things they cannot see*, because they see things by the light from the sun.¹⁰ It is when people walk in the nighttime that they stumble over things, because they have no light.”

¹¹ After he said that, he told us, “Our friend Lazarus has gone to sleep. But I will go there so that I can wake him up.”¹² So we said to him, “Lord, if he is sleeping, he will get well. *So you do not need to risk your life by going there*.”¹³ Jesus was speaking *figuratively* about Lazarus’ death, but we thought that he was talking about really being asleep.¹⁴ So then he told us plainly, “Lazarus is dead.¹⁵ But for your sake I am glad that I was not there *when he died*, because I want you to believe *more firmly that I am the Messiah/came from God*”. So now, *instead of staying here*, let’s go to him.”¹⁶ Then Thomas, who was {whom they} called ‘The Twin’, said to the rest of us disciples, “Let’s all go, so that we may die with him *when his enemies kill him*.”

John 11:17-40

THEME: *Lazarus’ sisters expressed disappointment that Jesus did not come and heal Lazarus before he died.*

¹⁷ When we arrived *close to Bethany*, someone told Jesus that Lazarus *had died and had been buried and his body had* been in the tomb for four days.¹⁸ Bethany is less than *two miles/three kilometers* from Jerusalem.¹⁹ Many Jews had come *from Jerusalem* to console Martha and Mary concerning *the death of* their *younger* brother.²⁰ When Martha heard *someone say* that Jesus was coming, she went *along the road* to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house.²¹ When Martha *got to where Jesus was*, she said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died *because you would have healed him!*”²² But I know that even now God will do for you whatever you ask *concerning my brother*.”²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will become alive again!”²⁴ Martha said to him, “I know that he will become alive again when all people become alive again on the *Judgment day*.”²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the one who *enables people* to become alive again and who *causes people* to live *eternally*. Those who believe in me, even if they die, they will live *again*.”²⁶ Furthermore, all those who believe in me while they are alive, *their souls* will not die *forever*. Do you believe that?”²⁷ She said to him, “Yes, Lord! I believe that you are the Messiah, *the Son of God/the man who is also God*. You are the one *God promised to send* into the world!”

²⁸ After she said that, she returned *to the house* and took her *younger* sister, Mary, aside and said to her, “The Teacher is *close to our village*, and he wants to talk to you.”²⁹ When Mary heard that, she got up quickly and went to him.³⁰ Jesus had not yet entered the village; he was still at the place where Martha met him.³¹ The Jews who were in the house with Mary, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go outside. So they followed her, thinking that she was going to the tomb *where they had buried Lazarus*, in order to cry there.

³² When Mary got to where Jesus was and saw him, she prostrated herself at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my *younger* brother would not have died!”³³ When Jesus saw her crying, and saw that the Jews who had come with her were also crying, he was very angry *that Satan had caused Lazarus to die* (OR, very troubled) and disturbed in his spirit.³⁴ He said, “Where have you buried *him/his body*?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.”³⁵ Jesus began to cry.³⁶ Then *some of the Jews* said, “Look how much he loved Lazarus!”³⁷ But some others said, “He enabled a blind man to see. So *he should have been able to heal this man so that he did not die!*”*why did he not heal this man so that he did not die?*” [RHQ]

³⁸ Within himself Jesus was again very angry *about Lazarus dying* (OR, very troubled). He came to the tomb. It was a cave. The entrance had been covered with a large stone.³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone!” Martha, *who, as I mentioned before, was an older* sister of the man who had died, said, “Lord, his *body* has been *in the tomb* for four days, so now there will be a bad smell!”⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “I told [RHQ] you that if you believed *in me/what I can do*, you would see how great God is! Have you *forgotten that?*”

John 11:41-48

THEME: *Jesus caused Lazarus to be alive again.*

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up *toward heaven* and said, “My Father, I thank you that you heard me *when I prayed about this earlier*.”⁴² I know that you always hear me *when I pray*. But instead of *just praying silently*, I said that for the sake of the people who are standing here. I want them to believe that you sent me.”⁴³ After he said that, he shouted, “Lazarus, come out!”⁴⁴ The man who *had been dead* came out! The strips of cloth were still wrapped around his *hands and feet*, and a cloth was still around his face, *but he came out!* Jesus said to them, “Take off the cloths so that he can walk easily!” *So they did that*.

⁴⁵ As a result, many of the Jews who had come to see Mary and who had seen what Jesus did, believed that he *was the Messiah/had come from God*.⁴⁶ But some of the *others* went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.⁴⁷ So

the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered all the members of the *Jewish Council* together. They started saying to each other, "What are we going to do *about Jesus*? He is performing many miracles! ⁴⁸ If we allow him to keep *doing this*, everyone will believe <in him/that he *is the Messiah*>, and they will make him their king. Then the Roman army will come and destroy our Temple and our whole nation of Israel!"

John 11:49-57

THEME: *The Jewish leaders decided to kill Jesus.*

⁴⁹ One of the *Jewish Council* members was Caiaphas. He was the Jewish high priest that year. *Hinting that they should get rid of Jesus*, he said to them, "You *talk as though* you do not know anything [HYP]! ⁵⁰ You do not realize that it would be much better for us if one man died for the sake of the people rather than that *the Romans kill* all the *people of our Jewish* nation." ⁵¹ He said that, not because he thought of it himself. Instead, since he was the high priest that year, he was prophesying that Jesus would die for the whole *Jewish* nation. ⁵² But he was also prophesying that Jesus would die, not just for the Jews, but for all the people living in other lands who *would belong* to God, in order that he would unite *all of them into one group*. ⁵³ So from that day the *Jewish leaders* started to make plans how they could kill Jesus.

⁵⁴ Because of that, Jesus no longer traveled around publicly among the Jewish people. Instead, he left *Jerusalem*, along with us disciples, and went to a village called Ephraim, in an area near the desolate region. We stayed there *for a while*.

⁵⁵ When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover *celebration*, many Jews went up to Jerusalem from other places in the country. They went there to perform the rituals to make themselves acceptable to God before the Passover *celebration* started. ⁵⁶⁻⁵⁷ The Jewish chief priests and Pharisees issued an order that if anyone found out where Jesus was, that person should report it to them, in order that they could seize him. *to So the people thought that Jesus would probably not dare to come to the celebration*. But they kept looking for him, and as they were standing in the Temple *courtyard* they were saying to each other, "What do you think? He will not come to the celebration, will he?"

John 12:1-8

THEME: *Lazarus' older sister, Mary, poured perfume on Jesus' feet.*

12 ¹ Six days before the Passover *celebration* started, Jesus arrived in Bethany *village*, along with us. That was where Lazarus lived. He was the man Jesus *previously* caused to be alive again after he died. ² There they gave a dinner to honor Jesus. Martha served the meal. *Her younger brother*, Lazarus, was among the people who were eating with him. ³ Then Mary took a *bottle* of expensive perfume called nard and poured it on Jesus' feet to honor him. Then she wiped his feet with her hair. The whole house was filled with the *beautiful* smell of the perfume.

⁴ But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, (OR, Judas, the man from Kerieth village) objected. He was the one who later enabled Jesus' enemies to seize him. ⁵ He said, "<We should have sold this perfume and given *the money* to poor people!/Why did we not sell this perfume and give *the money for it* to the poor people?> [RHQ] We could have gotten three hundred days' wages for it!" ⁶ He said that, not because he cared about the poor people, but instead, because he was a thief. He was the one who kept the bag of funds that people gave to help Jesus and us his disciples, and he often stole some of the money that was {that people} put into it. ⁷ Then Jesus said, "Do not bother her! *She bought* this perfume in order to save it until the day when they will bury me *after I die*. ⁸ There will always be poor people among you, so you can help them whenever you want to. But I will not be with you much longer, so it is good that she showed right now how much she appreciates me."

John 12:9-11

THEME: *The Jewish leaders decided to kill Lazarus, too.*

⁹ A large crowd of Jews heard *people say* that Jesus was there in Bethany. So they came, not only to see Jesus but also to see Lazarus, the man whom he had caused to become alive again after he died. ¹⁰ So the chief priests decided to kill Lazarus also, ¹¹ because many of the Jews were *deserting them* and going to Jesus and believing in him because of *Jesus causing Lazarus to be alive again*.

John 12:12-19

THEME: *Jesus entered Jerusalem as a king, but a humble one.*

¹² The next day the huge crowd of people that had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration heard *people say* that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ So they cut branches from some palm trees and took the branches out of the city to wave them when they met him. Some of them were shouting things like, "Hooray!" "May the Lord God bless the one who is coming with his authority [MTY]!" *Some other people were shouting*, "May God bless the King of Israel!" ¹⁴ When Jesus came near to Jerusalem, he got a young donkey and sat on it as he rode into the city. By doing this, he fulfilled what had been written {what a prophet had written} in Scripture,

¹⁵ You people of Jerusalem,
do not be afraid!

Look! Your king is coming!
He is riding on a donkey's colt!

¹⁶ At first we disciples did not understand those things. But after Jesus had returned to heaven, we realized that those things had been written {that a *prophet* had written those things} about him, and that *by* doing those things for him *the people had fulfilled what the prophet prophesied*.

¹⁷ The crowd that was with him continued to tell other people that he called Lazarus to come out of the tomb, *and that Lazarus had then become alive again*. ¹⁸ Because of that, many people, because they heard *others* say that he had performed this miracle, went to meet him. ¹⁹ So the Pharisees said to each other, "It is obvious that we are making no progress *in trying to stop him! It looks like* [HYP] everyone [MTY] is becoming his disciple!"

John 12:20-28a

THEME: *Jesus told some Greeks what people who wanted to be his disciples had to be ready to do.*

²⁰ Among those who went up to Jerusalem to worship God during the Passover celebration were some Greeks. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida town in Galilee province. They wanted him to do something for them. They said, "Sir, we would like to talk with Jesus." ²² So after Philip went and told that to Andrew, they both went and told Jesus. ²³ Then, to show them that he must die in order to give eternal life to non-Jews like those Greeks, Jesus replied to them, "It is time for God to honor me, the one who came from heaven. *That will happen when I die*. ²⁴ Listen to this carefully: *My life is like a seed* [MET]. If someone does not plant a kernel of grain in the ground, it does not change. It remains only one seed. But if it changes *after it is planted in the ground, it will grow and produce many seeds*. ²⁵ Anyone who strongly wants to keep on living *here on earth* will surely lose his life forever. But anyone who is willing to die [HYP] *for my sake* will surely gain eternal life. ²⁶ If *any of these Greeks or anyone else* wants to serve me, they must become my disciples. Then, *after they die*, they will be where I am, *in heaven*. My Father will honor all those who serve me.

²⁷ "Now I am disturbed in my inner being. <I do not know what to say./What shall I say?> [RHQ] Should I say, 'My Father, save me from this time *when I will suffer and die!*'? No, *I should not say that, because* the reason I came <*into this world/from heaven*> was that I would *suffer* [MTY] now. ²⁸ My Father, show how great you are!"

John 12:28b-36a

THEME: *God encouraged Jesus about his coming death by a voice from heaven.*

Then God spoke [EUP] from heaven, saying, "I have already shown how great *I am*, and I will do it again!" ²⁹ The crowd that was there heard *it but they did not understand the words*. Some said it was thunder. Others said an angel had spoken to him. ³⁰ Jesus replied to them, "The voice that you heard speaking *was God's voice, but* it was not for my benefit. It was for your benefit! ³¹ Now is the time for God to judge *the people in* [MTY] the world. Now is the time when *I will destroy the power of Satan*, the one who rules this world. ³² But as for me, when I am lifted {when *men* lift me} up from the ground *on a cross, I will make a way for* gathering everyone to myself." ³³ He said this to show us the way in which he was going to die.

³⁴ *Someone in* the crowd answered him, "We understand from the Scriptures that the Messiah will live forever. So why do you say that the one who came from heaven, *who is the Messiah*, will be lifted up {that *men* will lift up the one who came from heaven, *who is the Messiah*.} on a cross? What kind of man who came from heaven are you *talking about?* (OR, That's not the *kind* of Messiah *we are expecting!*") ³⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "*My message is like* [MET] a light for you. *I will be with you for only a little while longer*. Live and act as *you should* while I am still with you, *because suddenly you will have no more opportunity to hear my message! You do not want to be like* [MET] *someone* who cannot see where he is going any more *when it suddenly becomes dark!* ³⁶ Believe in my message [MET] while you still have an opportunity to do it, in order that you may become people who have my truth [MET] within you!"

John 12:36b-43

THEME: *Most of the Jewish leaders continued to reject Jesus' message.*

After he said those things, Jesus left them and hid from them. ³⁷ Although he had done many miracles while people were watching, *most of* them refused to believe that he is <*the Messiah/from God*>. ³⁸ *Their stubbornness and refusal to believe was similar to the stubbornness of the people that* the prophet Isaiah wrote about *long ago*,

Lord, <hardly anyone has believed our message!/who has believed our message?> [RHQ]
Most people refused to accept it,
even though you showed them your power!

³⁹ That was the reason why they were unable to believe. *It was like* Isaiah wrote somewhere else *that God said*,

⁴⁰ They have *refused to understand; they acted as though they were blind people!*
They were insensible in their inner beings!
As a result, they have not perceived *my truth!*
They have not understood it in their inner beings!
They have not turned *from their sinful lives*,
and because of that I cannot help them!

⁴¹ Isaiah wrote that because *it was as though* he saw *ahead of time* how great Jesus would be, and he prophesied *those things* about him.

⁴² Although most of the Jewish *leaders* [SYN] did not believe that Jesus is *<the Messiah/from God>*, some of them believed in him. But they would not tell anyone that they believed in him, because *they were afraid that if they said that*, the Pharisees would not let them worship in the synagogues. ⁴³ They wanted people to praise them more than they wanted God to praise them.

John 12:44-50

THEME: *Jesus warned that God would condemn those who rejected his message.*

⁴⁴ *Another day, when Jesus was teaching the people, he shouted, "Those who believe in me, they are not believing in me alone. Instead, it is as though they also believe in the one who sent me. ⁴⁵When they see me and what I am doing, it is as though they are seeing the one who sent me. ⁴⁶I have come into the world to show people God's truth, as a light shows people what is around them. I have come in order that people who believe in me will not remain ignorant of God's truth [MET], as those who are in the darkness are ignorant of what is around them.*

⁴⁷ "As for those who hear my message but do not obey *its commands*, I am not *the one who* judges them. *The main reason* that I came *<into the world/from heaven>* was not to judge *the people of* [MTY] the world. Instead, I came to save them *from being punished for their sins*. ⁴⁸ There is something that will judge those who reject me and do not accept my message. On the judgment day *God* will condemn them *because they rejected* the message that I have told them. ⁴⁹ I have not said things from my own *authority*. Instead, *my Father*, the one who sent me, instructed me what to say and how I should say it. ⁵⁰ I know that *paying attention* to what he has instructed us *leads to eternal life*. So whatever I say is exactly (OR, only) what *my Father* has told me to say."

John 13:1-17

THEME: *Jesus washed the disciples' feet as an example of humble service to each other.*

13 ¹ When it was the evening before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that it was time for him to leave this world and *to return to his Father in heaven*. He loved us who *were his disciples*. He knew *we would continue to live here* in this world, so now he *showed us* how completely he loved us. ² We were eating *the Passover meal*. *<The devil/Satan>* had already suggested to Judas *<Iscaiot/the man from Kerioth village>*, the son of Simon, that he should *<betray Jesus/enable Jesus' enemies to seize him>*. ³ But Jesus knew that his Father had given to him complete authority *to control the situation*. He knew that he had come from God and would soon return to God. ⁴ *But before he left us, he wanted to show us how we should love each other*. So he got up from where he was eating. He took off his *outer* cloak and wrapped a *long* towel around his waist, *as a slave would do*. ⁵ Then he poured some water in a basin. He began to wash our feet, and then dry them with the towel that he had wrapped around himself.

⁶ When he came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, it is not right for **you** [RHQ] to *humble yourself by washing my feet!*" ⁷ Jesus replied to him, "Now you do not understand *the meaning of* what I am doing, but you will understand later." ⁸ Peter said, "I will never, ever, *allow you to wash my feet!*" Jesus replied to him, "If I do not wash you, you cannot continue *<to be my disciple/to belong to me>*." ⁹ So Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, *in that case*, do not wash only my feet. Wash my hands and my head, *too!*" ¹⁰ Then, *to show him that after God had cleansed people from being guilty for sin, they needed only for God to forgive their daily sins* [MET], Jesus said to him, "Those who have recently bathed need only to have their feet washed, *because they get dirty very quickly on the dusty roads*. The *rest of their bodies* are clean. Similarly, I have made you *disciples* free/clean *from the guilt of your sins*, although not all of you are free from guilt." ¹¹ He knew which one of *us* was going to betray him. That is the reason he said, "Not all of you are free from guilt."

¹² After he finished washing our feet, he put his cloak back on. Then he sat down and said to us, "Do you understand what I have done for you? ¹³ You *show that you respect me by calling me 'Teacher' and 'Lord'*. You are right to say that, because I am your teacher and your Lord. ¹⁴ But if I, who am your teacher and your Lord, have washed your feet, you ought to *serve each other by doing things like* washing each other's feet. ¹⁵ I have made myself an example for you in order that you should *humbly serve each other* as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Listen to this carefully: A servant is not greater than his master. A messenger is not greater than the one who has sent him. So, *since you are not greater than I am, you should not be proud and unwilling to serve each other*. ¹⁷ Since you now know these things, *God will be pleased with you if you do them*."

John 13:18-30

THEME: *Jesus predicted that one of them would betray him to his enemies.*

¹⁸ "I am not saying that *God will bless* all of you. I knew *what all of you were like when I chose you*. But *I also chose the one who will betray me*, in order that what is written in Scripture might be fulfilled {to fulfill what someone/the psalmist wrote in Scripture}, 'The one who is *acting like he is my friend by eating with me* has become my enemy [IDM].'

¹⁹ "I am telling you *about someone betraying me* before it happens, in order that when it happens, you may continue to believe that I am *<the Messiah/who I say I am>*. ²⁰ Listen to this carefully: Those who accept any one of you whom I am

sending out, *God will consider that they are accepting me. And those who accept me, God will consider that they are accepting my Father, who sent me.*"

²¹ After Jesus said this, he was very troubled within himself. He solemnly declared, "Listen to this carefully: One of you is going to enable *my enemies* to seize me." ²² We looked at each other. We had no way to *know* whom he was talking about. ²³ *I, the man other people call 'the one Jesus loved'*, was sitting very close to Jesus. ²⁴ Simon Peter motioned to me to indicate that I should ask Jesus whom he was talking about. ²⁵ So I leaned close to Jesus and asked him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread after I dip it *in the sauce in the dish*." Then, *to show us that he knew who would enable his enemies to seize him*, after he dipped the bread *in the sauce*, he gave it to Judas <Iscariot/the man from Kerioth village>. ²⁷ As soon as *Judas ate* the bread, Satan took control of him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." ²⁸ But none of the rest of us who were sitting there knew why Jesus said that to him. ²⁹ Since Judas took care of the money *people gave us to help us*, some thought Jesus was telling him to *go and buy* some things we needed for the *Passover* celebration. *Some thought he was telling him to give some money to poor people.* ³⁰ As soon as Judas had eaten the bread, he left. It was dark *outside*, and it was dark [MET] *in his soul, too*.

John 13:31-35

THEME: *Jesus commanded his disciples that they should love each other.*

³¹ After Judas left, Jesus said, "Now it will be shown {*my Father will show*} how wonderful I, the one who came from heaven, am. And by what I do it will be seen {*people will see*} how great God is. ³² Since by what I do people will see how awesome God is, God himself will show people how awesome I am. And he will do that very soon.

³³ "*You whom I love as though you were my children*, I will continue with you only a short time longer. Then you will look for me, but I will not be here. Just like I told the Jewish *leaders* [SYN], I am telling you now, that where I am going, you cannot come *yet*." ³⁴ Now I am giving you a new commandment: you must love each other. You must love each other in the way that I have loved you. ³⁵ If you keep loving each other, everyone *who is aware of that* [HYP] will know that you are my disciples."

John 13:36-38

THEME: *Jesus also prophesied that Peter would deny that he knew Jesus.*

³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "The place where I am going, you cannot come with me now, but you will come there later." ³⁷ Peter said, "Lord, why can I not come with you now? I *am ready* to die for you!" ³⁸ Jesus answered, "*You say* [RHQ] that you *are ready* to die for me. But the truth is that before the rooster crows *early tomorrow morning*, you will say three times that you do not *know me!*"

John 14:1-14

THEME: *Jesus encouraged his disciples and told them that he is the only way to the Father.*

14 ¹ *Jesus continued by saying to us*, "Stop being anxious/worried. Keep on trusting in God (OR, You are trusting in God); also keep trusting in me. ² Where my Father is *in heaven* there is plenty of room! If that were not true, I would have told you. I am about to go *there* to prepare a place for you. ³ And because I will go *there* and prepare a place for you, I will return and take you to be with me. I will do that so that you may also be where I am. ⁴ You know the road to the place where I am going."

⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. So how can we know the road?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the road [MET] *to where my Father is*. I am the *one who reveals* [MET] the truth *about God* and the *one who gives eternal life to people*. I am the only one who can *enable people* to come to my Father. There is no other way. ⁷ If you *really* knew who I was, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you know him, and *it is as though* you have seen him."

⁸ Philip said to him, "Lord, show us your Father and that will be enough for us!" ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Philip, I have been with you for a long time. So <surely you should know who I *really am!*/why have you not come to know who I *really am?*> [RHQ] Those who have seen me, *it is as though* they have seen my Father. So <why do you say 'Show us your Father?'/you should not say 'Show us your Father!> [RHQ] ¹⁰ Do you not [RHQ] believe that I have a close relationship with my Father, and that my Father has a close relationship with me? The messages that I tell you do not come from me. They come from my Father, who has a close relationship with me. He is enabling me to *teach these things*, and to work the miracles that he *wants me to do*. ¹¹ Believe that I have a close relationship with my Father and that my Father has a close relationship with me. If you do not believe that just because of what I say, believe it because of the miracles themselves *that I have done*. ¹² Listen to this carefully: You who trust in me will do the *kinds of miracles that I have done*. *Because of what I will do for you* (OR, *Because I will send God's Spirit to you*) after I go to my Father, you will be able to do *miracles* that will be greater than *the ones I have done*. ¹³ And whatever you, using my authority, ask me to do, I will do it, in order that I can show you how great my Father is. ¹⁴ Anything that you ask *my Father to do*, *anything that you ask* with my authority [MTY], I will do.

John 14:15-31

THEME: *Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to them.*

¹⁵“If you love me, you will do what I have commanded you. ¹⁶Then I myself will request *my* Father, and he will send you someone else who will <encourage/be like a legal counsel for> you. ¹⁷*I am talking about* the Spirit, who *will teach you God’s truth*. He will be with you forever. Those who are opposed to God [MTY] cannot receive him, because they cannot understand what he *does*, and they cannot know who he is. But you know who he is, because he is with you and he will be inside you. ¹⁸*When I leave you*, I will not let you be alone/helpless [MET]. *When I send the Spirit, it will be like* I am coming back to you (OR, *When I rise from the dead*, I will come back to you.) ¹⁹Soon those who do not belong to God [MTY] will not see me anymore. But *when the Spirit comes to you, it will be as though* you will be seeing me again (OR, But *after I become alive again*, you will see me again.) Because I will be alive again, you also will have *eternal* life. ²⁰At that time you will know that I have a close relationship with my Father, and you will have a close relationship with me, and I will have a close relationship with you. ²¹Those who have accepted my commands and obey them are the people who love me. My Father will love those who love me. I also will love them, and I will fully reveal to them *what I am like*.”

²²Then Judas spoke to him. He was not Judas Iscariot, *but instead a disciple whose other name was Thaddeus*. He said, “Lord, what has happened so that you can fully reveal to us what you are like, and not reveal that to those who do not belong to God [MTY]?” ²³Jesus replied to him, “Those who love me will obey what I have told them. My Father will *also* love them. It is **those** people whom my Father and I will *be able to* come to and <live with/have a personal relationship with>. ²⁴But those who do not love me will not obey what I have told them. *So I cannot reveal to them what I am really like*.”

“These words that I am telling you have not come just from me. They came from *my* Father, the one who sent me. ²⁵I have told you all these things while I am still with you. ²⁶But *my* Father will send the Holy Spirit. He is the one who will <encourage/be like a legal counsel for> you. He will come with my authority [MTY]. He will teach you all of *God’s truth that you need to know*. He will also cause you to remember all the things that I have told you. ²⁷As I leave you, I am causing you to have *inner* peace. This *inner* peace comes from **me**. I am not causing you to have something that those who do not belong to God [MTY] can give you. So stop being anxious/worried, and do not be afraid.

²⁸“You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, but *later* I will come back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going back to *my* Father, because *my* Father is greater than I am, *and there he will honor me and will send the Spirit to you*. ²⁹I have told you *these things now* before they happen, so that when they happen you will believe *that what I said is true*. ³⁰I will not *be able to* talk to you much longer, because what happens to me will be as though *Satan*, the ruler of this world, is coming to *attack me*. But he has no *control over what happens to me*. ³¹Instead, the people who do not belong to God [MTY] must learn *from what happens to me* that I love *my* Father, and I am doing the things that he has commanded me to do. Now, let’s get up and leave here.”

John 15:1-17

THEME: *Jesus taught them that they needed to remain closely united to him in order to live in a way that would please God.*

15 ¹*Jesus talked to us as we were walking along. Speaking figuratively of the need for us to live in a way that God wants us to, he said*, “I am like [MET] a genuine vine, *not like those Jewish leaders who do not teach the truth*. My father is like [MET] a gardener who *works to take care of a vineyard*. ²*Just like a gardener cuts off the branches that bear no grapes [MET], God gets rid of those who do not please him even though they say that they belong to him*. Those branches that bear fruit, *the gardener trims so that they may bear more grapes. Similarly, my Father disciplines/corrects those who live as he wants them to live*. ³You are already *like* the branches *that a gardener trims because you have believed the message that I have told you*. ⁴Remain having a close relationship with me. *If you do that*, I will remain having a close relationship with you. A branch *of a vine cannot bear fruit if it is cut off and left by itself*. To bear fruit, it must remain attached to the vine. Similarly, you cannot *live the way that God wants you to* if you do not remain united to me [MET].

⁵“I am *like* [MET] a vine. You are *like* [MET] the branches. All those who remain having a close relationship with me and I remain having a close relationship with them will *do much that pleases God, like [MET] a vine that bears much fruit. Remember that you can do nothing [HYP] that truly pleases God without my help*. ⁶A *gardener cuts off and* throws away useless branches. Then, after they dry up, *he picks them up and* throws them into a fire and burns them [SIM]. Similarly, everyone who does not remain having a close relationship with me, *God will get rid of*. ⁷If you remain having a close relationship with me and you keep *living in accordance with* my message, you can ask *God to do* anything for you, and he will do it. ⁸The way my Father is honored is by your {The way you honor my Father is by} doing much that pleases him [MET], and by doing that you will show that you are my disciples.

⁹“I have loved you just as *my* Father has loved me. Now keep living in a way *that is appropriate for those whom I love*. ¹⁰If you obey what I have commanded you, you will be acting in a way *that is appropriate for those whom I love*, just like I have obeyed what my Father has commanded me and I act *in a way that is appropriate for someone whom he loves*. ¹¹I have told you these things so that you may be joyful as I *am joyful*, and that you may be completely joyful. ¹²What I am commanding you is this: Love each other just like I have loved you. ¹³The best way that people can show that they love someone is to die for that person. There is no way that you can love someone in a greater way than that. ¹⁴You *show that you are my friends* if you keep doing what I have commanded you. ¹⁵I will no longer call you my servants, because servants do not know *why* their masters *want them to* do things. Instead, I have said that you are my friends, because I,

acting like a friend, have revealed to you **everything** that my Father told me. ¹⁶ You did not decide to become my *disciples*. Instead, I chose you, so that you would do many things that please him [MET]. The results of what you do will last *forever*. I also chose you so that *my* Father will do for you whatever you, using my authority, ask him to do [MTY]. ¹⁷ *I repeat what I have commanded you: Love each other.*

John 15:18-16:4

THEME: *Jesus taught them that those who were opposed to God would hate them, too.*

¹⁸ “The people who are opposed to God will hate you. When that happens, remember that they hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to those who are opposed to God [MTY], they would love *you like they love* those who belong to them. But you do not belong to those who are opposed to God [MTY]. Instead, I chose you so that you would separate yourselves from [MTY] them. That is why those who are opposed to God [MTY] hate you. ²⁰ Remember these words that I told you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ *That means that you, who are like my servants, cannot expect people to treat you better than they treat me.* So, since they have <persecuted me/caused me to suffer>, they will <persecute you/cause you to suffer> also. If they had paid attention to the things I taught them, they would pay attention to what you teach them. ²¹ They will treat you like that because you *belong to* me [MTY], and because they do not know the one who sent me. ²² If I had not come and spoken *God’s message* to them, they would not be guilty of *rejecting me and my message*. But now *I have come and told them God’s message*, so they will have no excuse *when God judges them* for their sin. ²³ All those who hate me, *it is as though* they hate my Father as well. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the *miracles* that no one else ever did, they would not be guilty of the sin of *rejecting me*. But now, *although* they have seen *those miracles*, they have hated both me and my Father. ²⁵ But this has happened in order that these words that have been written in their Scriptures might be fulfilled {to fulfill this that <someone/the Psalmist> wrote in their Scriptures}: ‘They hated me for no reason.’

²⁶ “*Later* I will send to you from *my* Father the one who will <encourage/be like a legal counsel for> you. He is the Spirit *who will teach you God’s truth*. He will come from my Father. He will tell people about me. ²⁷ But you *disciples* must also tell people *about me*, because you have been with me from the time when I started *my ministry* [MTY].”

16 ¹ *Jesus continued by saying to us*, “I have told you these things in order that you will not stop trusting in me *when people <cause you to suffer/persecute you>*. ² They will not allow you to worship in <synagogues/their meeting places>. In fact, there will be a time when anyone who kills you will think that he is serving God *by doing that*. ³ They will do such things because they have never known who I *really am*, nor who *my* Father *is*. ⁴ I have told you these things in order that when *they start <to cause you to suffer/to persecute you>* [MTY], you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you these things when you first started *to accompany me* [MTY] because I was with you, *and they were causing trouble for me, not for you*.

John 16:5-15

THEME: *Jesus told them some things that the Holy Spirit would do.*

⁵ “Now I am *about to* return to the one who sent me. But *I am disappointed* that none of you is asking me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ Instead, because I have told you these things, you are very sad. ⁷ But the truth is that it is good for you that I am going away, because if I do not go away, the *Holy Spirit*, who will <encourage/be like a legal counsel for> you will not come to you. But when I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will prove that those who do not belong to God [MTY] *are wrong about what is* sinful and about who is really righteous and about whom *God will judge and condemn for their sin*. ⁹ *He will tell people that their greatest sin* is that they do not believe in me. ¹⁰ *He will tell people that* because I am going *back* to my Father, and you will no longer see me, *you will know that I am the one who was truly* righteous. ¹¹ *He will tell people that the fact* that God has already determined that he will punish *Satan*, the one who rules this world, shows that *some day* God will also punish *those who do not belong to him*.

¹² “I have many more things that *I would like* to tell you, but you are not able to accept them now. ¹³ But *God’s Spirit* is the one who will teach you *God’s truth*. When he comes, he will guide you so that you *understand* all *spiritual* truth. He will not speak from his own *authority*. Instead, it is the things that he hears *my Father say* that he will tell you. He will also tell you about things that will happen *later*. ¹⁴ He will honor me by taking my *truth* and revealing it to you. ¹⁵ Everything that *my* Father has is mine. That is why I said that the Spirit is able to take my truth and reveal it to you.

John 16:16-33

THEME: *Jesus told them that after he left they would be sad, but that they would later be joyful when they saw him again.*

¹⁶ “After a short time *I will leave you*, and you will not see me. Then a short time *after that* you will see me *again*.” ¹⁷ So some of us said to each other, “What does he mean by saying ‘After a short time you will not see me,’ and ‘A short time after that you will see me again’? And *what does he mean by* ‘Because I am going back to *my* Father’?” ¹⁸ We kept asking each other, “*What does he mean by* saying ‘After a little while’? We do not understand what he is saying.”

¹⁹ Jesus realized that we wanted to ask him *about that*. So he said to us, “You are asking [RHQ] each other *what I meant* when I said, ‘After a short time you will not see me, and then a short time *after that* you will see me *again*.’” ²⁰ Listen to this carefully: *After I <leave you/die>*, those who oppose God [MTY] will be happy, but you will be sad. But *later* you will stop

being sad and you will become joyful. ²¹A woman who is about to bear a child feels pain, because that is *what happens* [MTY] at that time. But after her baby is born, she forgets that pain, because she is very joyful that her child has been born. ²²It will be the same with you. Now *I will die and* you will be sad. But after that, I will see you again. Then you will be joyful, and no one will be able to stop you from being joyful. ²³When that happens, you will not ask **me** any questions *about anything*. Listen to this carefully: *After that happens, my Father* will do for you anything you ask, because of his relationship with me [MTY]. ²⁴Up to the present time you have not asked *God to do* anything for you because of his relationship with me [MTY]. Now keep asking *him for things that you need*. *If you do that*, you will receive them, and then you will be completely joyful.

²⁵“Although I have been speaking these things using figurative language, there will soon be a time when I will no longer use that kind of language. Instead, I will tell you plainly *about my Father/what my Father wants*”. ²⁶At that time, you will ask *him for things* *because you belong to me/with my authority* [MTY]. I will not *need to ask my Father* to do what you ask. ²⁷*My Father himself loves you* because you have loved me and because you have believed that I came from God, so *he wants you to ask him* (OR, *so he does not need anyone to persuade him to help you*) ²⁸I came from *my Father* into this world. Now I will be leaving this world and going *back to my Father*.”

²⁹Then *we*, his disciples, said, “Now you are speaking plainly, without using figurative language. ³⁰Now we understand that you know everything. You do not need that anyone ask you questions *about anything, because you know what we want to ask before we ask you*. That also leads us to believe that you came from God.”

³¹Jesus replied to us, “**Now** you [RHQ] say that you believe *that I came from God*. ³²But listen! There will soon be a time, and that time is already here, when you will all run away! Each of you will run away to your own home. You will leave me, and I will be alone. But I will not *really* be alone *at that time*, because *my Father* is always with me. ³³I have told you these things in order that you may have *inner peace* because of your relationship with me. In this world you will have trouble. But be courageous! I have defeated those who are opposed to me [MTY], and *you can defeat them, too!*”

John 17:1-5

THEME: *Jesus prayed that God would honor him.*

17 ¹After Jesus said those things, he looked *up* toward heaven. Then he prayed, “*My Father*, it is now the time [MTY] *for me to suffer and die*. Honor me *as I do that*, in order that I may honor you. ²You gave me authority over all people, in order that I might enable all those whom you chose *to come to me to live eternally*. ³*The way for people to live eternally* is for them to know that you are the only true God, and to know that *I, Jesus, am the Messiah, the one you have sent*. ⁴I have honored you here on this earth by completing all the work that you gave me to do. ⁵*My Father*, now honor me when I am with you *again*, by causing me to have the greatness I had when I was with you before the world began.

John 17:6-19

THEME: *Jesus prayed that God would protect his disciples.*

⁶“I have revealed *what you are like* to the people whom you brought to me from among those who do not belong to you [MTY]. Those *who came to me* belonged to you, and you brought them to me. Now they have obeyed your message. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me, *your message and your work*, comes from you. ⁸I gave them the message that you gave me, and they have accepted it. They now know for certain that I came from you. They now believe that you sent me. ⁹I am praying for them. I am not praying for those *who do not belong to you* [MTY]. Instead, *I am praying* for those whom you have brought to me, because they belong to you. ¹⁰*All the disciples* that I have belong to you, and all those who belong to you also belong to me. They have shown how great I am. ¹¹I will not be *staying* in the world any longer. I will be coming back to you. They, however, will be *here* in the world *among those who are opposed to you*. *My Holy Father*, protect them *from spiritual harm* by your power [MTY], the power that you gave me, in order that they may be united as we are united. ¹²While I have been with them, I have *completely* protected them by the power [MTY] that you gave me. As a result, only one of them will be eternally separated from you. He is the one who was doomed to be eternally separated from you. *That has happened to fulfill what a prophet wrote* in the Scriptures *would happen*.

¹³“*Father*, now I am about to return to you. I have said these things while I am still *here* in the world in order that my *disciples* may fully experience being joyful, as I have been joyful. ¹⁴I have given them your message. As a result, those who are opposed to you [MTY] have hated them, because *my disciples* do not belong to those who oppose you [MTY], just like I do not belong to those who oppose you [MTY]. ¹⁵I am asking you, not that you take them out of this world, but instead that you protect them from *Satan*, the evil one. ¹⁶They do not belong to those who are opposed to you [MTY], just like I also do not belong to them. ¹⁷Set *my disciples* apart so that they may *completely belong to/serve* you, by *enabling them to live in accordance with* what is true. Your message is true. ¹⁸Just like you sent me here into this world, now I surely will be sending them *to other places* in [MTY] the world. ¹⁹I set myself apart to completely belong to you, in order that they also may truly be dedicated {dedicate themselves} completely to you.

John 17:20-26

THEME: *Jesus prayed for future believers.*

²⁰“I am praying not only for these *eleven disciples*. I am praying also for those who *will* believe in me as a result of *hearing* their message. ²¹ *My Father, I want* all of them to be united, just like I am united with you because of my relationship with you and as you are united with me because of your relationship with me. I also want them to be united with us. *I want that to happen* so that those who do not know you [MTY] may know that you sent me. ²² I have honored my disciples just like you honored me, in order that they may be united, as we are united. ²³ I want them to be united just like they are united with me and as you are united with me. May they be completely united, in order that those who do not belong to you [MTY] may know that you sent me and that you have loved them just like you have loved me.

²⁴“*My Father, I want the disciples* you have brought to me to *some day* be with me *in heaven*, where I will be. I want them to see my greatness. I want them to see the greatness you gave me because you loved me. You gave me that greatness before you created the world.

²⁵“*My righteous Father*, although the people who do not belong to you [MTY] do not know what you *are like*, I know what you *are like*, and my disciples know that you sent me. ²⁶ I have revealed to them *what you are like*, and I will continue to reveal to them *what you are like*. I will do that in order that they may love *others* just like you love me, and in order that I may live in them *by my Spirit*.”

John 18:1-11

THEME: *They seized Jesus in a grove of olive trees.*

18 ¹ After Jesus finished praying, he went across the Kidron brook, along with *us* disciples, to a grove of *olive trees*.

² Judas, who was *about* to enable Jesus’ enemies to seize him, knew that *he would probably be* there. *He knew that because* Jesus often gathered there with us. ³ So Judas came to that grove. He was leading a troop of Roman *soldiers* and some Temple guards who had been sent by the Pharisees and chief priests. They were carrying torches and lamps and weapons. ⁴ Jesus knew everything that was about to happen to him. So *as they approached*, he stepped forward and asked them, “Whom are you looking for?” ⁵ They replied to him, “Jesus, the man from Nazareth.” He replied, “That is who I am.” Judas, the one who was enabling his enemies to seize him, was with them. ⁶ When Jesus told them, “That is who I am,” they lurched backward and fell down on the ground *because of his power*. ⁷ He asked them again, “Who are you looking for?” They said, “Jesus, *the man* from Nazareth.” ⁸ Jesus replied, “I told you that I am Jesus. So since I am the one you are looking for, allow these *disciples of mine* to go.” ⁹ *This happened* in order that *when they did what he asked them to do*, the words would be fulfilled that he had prayed, ‘I will never lose any of those whom God has brought to me.’

¹⁰ Simon Peter had a *long* dagger. So he drew it and *tried to kill* the high priest’s servant, *but he only* cut off the man’s right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. ¹¹ Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword *back* into its sheath! <I must endure what my Father wants me to suffer./Do you not think that I must endure what my Father wants me to suffer?> [MET, RHQ]”

John 18:12-14

THEME: *They took Jesus to be questioned by Annas, the former high priest.*

¹² Then the troop of soldiers, along with their commander and the Jewish Temple guards, seized Jesus. They tied his hands *behind his back*. ¹³ Then they took him first to Annas, *who was previously the high priest*. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Caiaphas was the high priest that year. ¹⁴ He was the one who *previously* advised the Jewish *Council* that it would be better if one man died for the sake of the people *than for all the people of the Jewish nation to die*.

John 18:15-18

THEME: *Peter denied that he was Jesus’ disciple.*

¹⁵ Simon Peter and *I* were following Jesus. Because the high priest knew *me*, *his doorkeeper permitted me* to enter the courtyard. ¹⁶ But Peter *had to* wait outside near the doorway. However, since I knew the high priest, I went back to the doorway and spoke to the girl who was guarding the entrance. Then *she allowed* Peter to come in. ¹⁷ The servant girl who was guarding the doorway said to Peter, “Surely you are not another disciple of that man *they have arrested*, are you?” He said, “I am not.” ¹⁸ It was cold, so the high priest’s slaves and Temple guards made a charcoal fire and were standing around it to keep warm. Peter was also standing near it, warming himself.

John 18:19-24

THEME: *The High Priest questioned Jesus.*

¹⁹ *While Peter was doing that*, the high priest asked Jesus about his disciples and about what he was teaching people.

²⁰ Jesus replied, “I have always spoken where many people [MTY, HYP] could hear me. I have taught them in <the synagogues/their meeting places> and in the Temple *courtyard*, in places where many [HYP] Jews come together. I have

spoken nothing secretly. ²¹ So <why are you asking me questions *like this illegally?*/you should not be asking me questions *like this illegally!*> [RHQ] Ask the people who heard what I taught! They certainly know what I said!" ²² After Jesus said that, one of the Temple guards standing near him slapped him on his face. He said, "<That is not the way you should answer the high priest!/Is that the way you should answer the high priest?> [RHQ]" ²³ Jesus replied to him, "If I had said something that was contrary to your laws, you could have told me that what I said that was wrong. But because I said only what was right, <you should not be striking me!/why are you striking me?> [RHQ]" ²⁴ Then after Jesus' hands were tied {after they tied Jesus hands} again, Annas sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

John 18:25-27

THEME: Peter denied two more times that he knew Jesus.

²⁵ As Simon Peter was standing warming himself at the fire, someone else said to him, "You are not one of that man's disciples, are you?" He denied that he was, and said, "I am not." ²⁶ Later one of the high priest's servants, a man who was a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off before, said to him, "I saw you with that man in the grove of olive trees, did I not?" ²⁷ Peter again denied it. Immediately a rooster crowed, as Jesus had said would happen.

John 18:28-40

THEME: Pilate the governor questioned Jesus.

²⁸ Then the Jewish leaders [SYN] led Jesus from the home of Caiaphas to the headquarters of Pilate, the Roman governor. It was before dawn. Pilate was a non-Jew, and they thought that if they entered his headquarters, they would become unacceptable to God {God would reject them}, and as a result they would not be able to eat the food during the Passover celebration. Because of that, they did not want to enter Pilate's headquarters. ²⁹ So Pilate came out to talk to them. He said, "What law do you say that this man has disobeyed?" ³⁰ They knew that Jesus had not disobeyed any Roman law, so they did not want to answer him. Instead, they said, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have brought him to you!" ³¹ Then Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your own laws!" Then the Jewish leaders [SYN] said, "No! We want him executed, but we want you Romans to execute him, because we Jews have no right to execute anyone!" ³² The Romans executed people by nailing them to a cross. So, as a result of what the Jewish leaders said, it was fulfilled {the Romans would fulfill} what Jesus had said previously about the way he was going to die.

³³ Pilate then went back inside his headquarters. He summoned Jesus. Because the Jewish leaders had said that Jesus claimed to be a king, he said to him scornfully, "Are you the king of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus replied, "Are you asking that because you yourself want to know if I claim to be a king, or because <someone else/Caiaphas> said that I claim to be their king?" ³⁵ Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, so <I cannot understand these matters!/how can I understand these matters?> [RHQ] It was your fellow Jews and your chief priests who brought you to me! What have you done to make them want to execute you?" ³⁶ Jesus replied, "It is not people in [MTY] this world who are making me king. If it was people in this world who were making me a king, my disciples would have fought in order that the Jewish leaders [SYN] would be prevented {to prevent the Jewish leaders [SYN]} from seizing me. But it is not someone here in this world who is making me a king." ³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, "So are you saying that you are a king?" Jesus replied, "Yes, what you have said about my being a king is correct. I was born to become a king, and I came into this world to tell people the truth about God. Everyone who believes the truth pays attention to what I say." ³⁸ Pilate said to him, "How can anyone know what the truth is?"

After he said that, he went outside and talked to the Jewish leaders [SYN] again. He said to them, "I do not find that he has done anything at all for which I should punish him." ³⁹ But you Jews customarily, every year during the Passover celebration, ask me to release for you someone who is in prison. So would you like for me to release for you the man who you Jews say is your king?" ⁴⁰ They shouted again, "No, do not release this man! Instead, release Barabbas!" But Barabbas was in prison because he was a revolutionist!

John 19:1-16a

THEME: Pilate finally permitted them to crucify Jesus.

19 ¹ Then Pilate took Jesus inside and had soldiers <scourge Jesus/hit Jesus with a whip that had pieces of metal or bone fastened to it>. ² The soldiers also took some branches with thorns and wove them to make something like a crown. Then they put it on his head. They also put a purple robe on him. They did these things to ridicule him by pretending that he was a king. ³ Then they kept coming to him and saying, "Hooray for the King of the Jews [IRO]!" and slapping him on his face.

⁴ Once more Pilate came outside and said to the crowd, "Look! I am bringing him out to you so that you may know that I do not find that he has done anything for which we should punish him any more." ⁵ When Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Look at this wretched man!" ⁶ When the chief priests and Temple guards saw him, they shouted, "Command your soldiers to kill him by nailing him to a cross! Crucify him!" Pilate, knowing that they could not legally do it themselves, said to them, "You yourselves take him and nail him to a cross! As for me, I do not find that he has done anything for which we should punish him." ⁷ The Jewish leaders [SYN] replied, "Our ancestor Moses gave

us the law that says we must kill anyone *who claims to be God*. This man claims that he is <the Son of/the man who is also> God, so you must have him killed {command your soldiers to kill him}.”⁸ When Pilate heard that, he was more afraid of what would happen to himself if he commanded the soldiers to kill Jesus.⁹ So he took Jesus back inside the headquarters. He said to Jesus, “Where do you really come from?” But Jesus did not answer him.¹⁰ So Pilate said to him, “Are you refusing to answer me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you, and I also have authority to have you crucified {command my soldiers to crucify you}?”¹¹ Jesus replied, “The only authority you have is what has been given to you by God [MTY] {what God [MTY] has given you}. The high priest put me into your hands. He has done to me what he wanted to do, and you do not really want to do it. So he is guilty of committing a greater sin than you are.”

¹² Because of that, Pilate kept trying to release Jesus. But the Jewish leaders [SYN], threatening to report to the Emperor that Pilate was not going to punish a man who claimed he was a king, continued to shout, “Anyone who claims that he is a king is opposing the Emperor! So if you release this man, we will make sure that the Emperor learns about it, and then he will not consider you as his friend!”¹³ When Pilate heard that, he brought Jesus out again. He sat down at the place where he made decisions about punishing people. The place was called {People called it} The Stone Pavement. In the Aramaic language its name was Gabbatha.¹⁴ It was almost noontime, on the day that they prepared things for the Passover celebration (OR, the day before the Sabbath during the Passover celebration).

Pilate said to the Jewish leaders [SYN], ridiculing them, “Look at your king!”¹⁵ They shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Have him crucified {Command your soldiers to nail him to a cross}!” Pilate said to them, “He is your king! Do you really want me to tell my soldiers to nail him to a cross?” The chief priests replied, “The Emperor is our king! We do not have any other king!”¹⁶ Then at last Pilate agreed to do what they wanted, and he told the soldiers to crucify Jesus.

John 19:16b-24

THEME: They nailed Jesus to a cross.

Then the soldiers took Jesus away.¹⁷ As they left, he himself was carrying the cross on which they were going to nail him. They went to a place called The Place of a Skull. In the Aramaic language it is called {they call it} Golgotha.¹⁸ There, after removing most of his clothes, the soldiers nailed him to the cross. They also nailed two other criminals to crosses. There was one on each side, and Jesus was in the middle.

¹⁹ Pilate also had them write on a board a notice that stated why they were executing him, and fasten it to the cross. But all they wrote was ‘Jesus from Nazareth, the King of the Jews.’²⁰ Many Jews were able to read this sign, because the place where Jesus was nailed {where they nailed Jesus} to the cross was very close to Jerusalem, where many people had come for the celebration, and because it was written {they wrote it} in three languages: Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.²¹ So the Jewish priests went back to Pilate and protested, saying to him, “Change what they have written from ‘the King of the Jews’ to ‘This man said that he is the King of the Jews!’”²² Pilate replied, “What I told them to write is what they have written, and I will not change it.”

²³ After the soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier. But they kept his cloak separate. This cloak had been woven from top to bottom from one piece of cloth.²⁴ So they said to each other, “Let’s not tear it. Instead, let’s decide <by throwing lots/by gambling> who will get it.” So that is what the soldiers did. As a result, these words were fulfilled {they fulfilled these words} that the Psalmist had written in Scripture,

They divided most of my clothes among themselves.

They cast lots for one piece of my clothing.

John 19:25-27

THEME: Jesus entrusted his mother to John’s care.

²⁵ Near the cross where they had nailed Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and another Mary, the woman from Magdala village.²⁶ Jesus saw his mother standing there. He also saw me standing near by. Then he said to his mother, “This man will now be like your son.”²⁷ And he said to me, “Treat this woman as [MET] your mother.” So from that time I took her to my home and took care of her.

John 19:28-37

THEME: Jesus died.

²⁸ Later, Jesus knew that everything that God sent him to do had now been completed {that he had now completed everything that God sent him to do}, but he knew that something else that was written in the Scriptures had to be fulfilled {that he had to fulfill something else that they had written in the Scriptures}. So he said, “I am thirsty!”²⁹ There was a jar of sour wine there. So someone took a stalk of a plant called hyssop and fastened a sponge to it. Then he dipped the sponge into the wine and lifted it up to Jesus’ lips.³⁰ When Jesus tasted the sour wine, he shouted, “I have finished all that I came to do!” Then he bowed his head and <died/handed over his spirit to God>.

³¹ That was the day that they prepared everything for their <Sabbath/day of rest>. The next day was a special day of rest, because it was the day of rest during the Passover celebration. The Jewish leaders [SYN] did not want the bodies of the three men to remain on the cross during their <Sabbath/day of rest> because leaving bodies hanging overnight would be

contrary to their Jewish laws. So they went to Pilate and asked him *to command that the legs of the three men on the crosses be broken* {the soldiers to break the legs of the three men on the crosses}, *so that they would die quickly*. Then their bodies could be taken down *and buried* {someone could take down their bodies and bury them}.³² So, *after Pilate agreed*, the soldiers went and broke the legs of the first man whom they had nailed on a cross near Jesus. Then they broke the legs of the second man.³³ But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was dead already. So they did not break his legs.³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear *to make sure that Jesus was dead*. Immediately blood *clots* and other liquid flowed out, *which showed that Jesus was really dead*.³⁵ I, John, saw this myself, and what I am writing is true. I know that I am telling the truth, and I am saying this in order that you may believe *in* (OR, *my testimony about*) Jesus.³⁶ These things happened in order that these words would be fulfilled {to fulfill these words} *that are written in Scripture*: "Not one of his bones will be broken {No one will break any of his bones}."³⁷

³⁷ And they fulfilled another Scripture passage *that has these words*: "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

John 19:38-42

THEME: *Joseph and others put Jesus' body in a cave.*

³⁸ Later, Joseph, from Arimathea town, *went to Pilate and asked Pilate to allow him to take Jesus' body down from the cross*. Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but he did not tell anyone that, because he was afraid of the other Jewish leaders [SYN]. Pilate permitted him to take Jesus' body, so he went, *along with others*, and took Jesus' body *down from the cross*.³⁹ Nicodemus was one of them. He was the man who previously went to visit Jesus at night. Nicodemus bought an *expensive* mixture of myrrh and aloe *spices to put on the body*. It weighed about <75 pounds/35 kilos>.⁴⁰ They took the body of Jesus and wrapped strips of linen cloth around it, putting the spices in with the strips of cloth. They did this according to the Jewish customs *about burying bodies in tombs*.⁴¹ Close to the place where Jesus was crucified {where they nailed Jesus to the cross} there was a grove of trees, and *at the edge of that grove* was a new burial cave. No body had ever been put in that cave *previously*.⁴² The Jewish day of rest would start *at sunset*, and they had to finish *burying his body before then*. So, since that cave was nearby, they laid Jesus' body there *and rolled a huge stone in front of the entrance*.

John 20:1-9

THEME: *On Sunday morning they discovered that Jesus' tomb was empty.*

20¹ Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary, the woman from Magdala *village*, went to the *burial cave with some other women*. She saw that the stone had been removed {that someone had removed the stone} from the *entrance to the cave*.² So she ran to where Simon Peter and I *were staying in Jerusalem*. She said to us, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the burial cave, and we do not know where they have put it!"³ So Peter and I started going to the cave.⁴ We were both running, but I ran faster than Peter and got there first.⁵ I stooped down *at the entrance* and looked inside. I saw the strips of linen cloth lying there *where his body had been laid*, but I did not go inside.⁶ Then Simon Peter, who was running behind me, arrived. He went inside the cave. He, too, saw the strips of linen cloth lying there.⁷ He also *saw the cloth that they had wrapped around Jesus' head*. It had been folded and put {Someone had folded it and put it} aside, separate from the linen strips.⁸ Then I also went inside. I saw *those things* and I believed *that Jesus had truly become alive again*.⁹ Before this happened, we did not understand from *what the prophets had written in the Scriptures*, that he had to become alive again after he died.

John 20:10-18

THEME: *Jesus appeared to Mary from Magdala.*

¹⁰ Then we two disciples went back to where we were staying. *In the meantime, Mary returned to the cave*.¹¹ As she stood outside the cave crying, she stooped down to look inside the cave.¹² She saw two angels in very white *clothing*, sitting at the place where Jesus' body had been laid. One was where his head had been, and the other was where his feet had been.¹³ They said to her, "Woman, why are you crying?" She said to them, "They have taken away *the body of my Lord*, and I do not know where they have put it!"¹⁴ After she said that, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, but she did not know that it was Jesus.¹⁵ He said to her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?" Thinking that he was the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have taken his body away, tell me where you have put it. Then I will get it *and bury it properly*."¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned toward him *again and recognized him*. Then she exclaimed in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" which means 'Teacher'.¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to me, because I have not yet returned to my Father. Go to my disciples and tell them, 'I am about to return to my Father and your Father, to the one who is my God and your God'."¹⁸ So Mary went to where we disciples were and told us that she had seen the Lord *alive again*. She also told us what Jesus said that she *should tell us*.

John 20:19-25

THEME: Jesus appeared to many of his disciples.

¹⁹ On that Sunday evening we disciples gathered together. The doors were locked {We locked the doors} because we were afraid that *the Jewish leaders* [SYN] *might arrest us. Suddenly Jesus appeared miraculously* and stood among us! He said to us, "May God give you *inner peace!*" ²⁰ After he said that, he showed us *the wounds in* his hands and his side. We were very happy when we saw the Lord! ²¹ Jesus said to us again, "May God give you peace! Just like *my Father* sent me, now I am sending you *to proclaim my message.*" ²² After saying that, he breathed on us and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit! ²³ If you forgive people for their having sinned, *God will already* have forgiven them. If you do not forgive them, *God has not* forgiven them."

²⁴ One of us disciples, Thomas, the one whom we called The Twin, was not with us when Jesus appeared to us. ²⁵ When the rest of us told him that we had seen the Lord, he said to us, "If I do not see the marks of the nails in his hands and put my fingers in the place where the nails were, and put my hands into the place in his side *where the soldier thrust the spear,* I will certainly not believe *that he was the one you saw!*"

John 20:26-29

THEME: Jesus appeared to all of his disciples, including Thomas.

²⁶ A week later we were in *the house* again. This time Thomas was with us. Although the doors had been locked {we had locked the doors}, Jesus *again* appeared *miraculously* and stood among us. He said, "May God give peace to you!" ²⁷ Then he *showed* Thomas *his hands* and said to him, "Put your finger here! Look at *the wounds in* my hands! Reach out your hand and put it in *the wound in* my side! Stop doubting [LIT/DOU]! Instead, believe *that I am alive again!*" ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "*You are truly* my Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed *that about me.* But *God is truly* pleased with those who have believed *that about me,* even though they have not seen me!"

John 20:30-31

THEME: John stated the purpose of this book.

³⁰ We disciples saw Jesus perform many other miracles, but *I* have not written about them in this book. ³¹ But these *that I have written about,* I have written about them in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, <the Son of God/the man who is also God>, and in order that you may have *eternal life by trusting* <in him/in what he *has done for you*> [MTY].

John 21:1-14

THEME: Jesus appeared to seven disciples and enabled them miraculously to catch a lot of fish.

21 ¹ After that, Jesus showed himself to *us* disciples when we were at Tiberias Lake, *which is another name for Galilee Lake.* This is what happened: ² Simon Peter, Thomas who was called {whom we called} The Twin, Nathaniel from Cana town in Galilee, my older brother and I, and two other disciples were together. ³ Simon Peter said to us, "*I am going to try to catch some fish.*" We said, "We will go with you." So we went down *to the lake* and got in the boat. But that night we caught nothing. ⁴ Early the next morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but we did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ He called out to us, "My friends, you have not *caught* any fish, have you?" We answered, "You are correct, *we have not caught any.*" ⁶ He said to us, "Throw your net out from the right-hand side of the boat! Then you will find some!" We did that, and we caught so many fish *in the net* that we were unable to pull the net into *the boat!* ⁷ *But I knew that it was Jesus,* so I said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Peter had taken off his cloak *while he was working,* but as soon as he heard *me say* "It is the Lord!" he wrapped his cloak around him and jumped into the water *and swam to shore.* ⁸ The rest of us came *to the shore* in the boat, pulling the net full of fish. We were not far from shore, only about a hundred yards/meters. ⁹ When we got to the shore, we saw that there was a fire of burning coals there, with a *large* fish on the fire, and *some* buns. ¹⁰ Jesus said to us, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught!" ¹¹ Simon Peter got in *the boat* and dragged the net to the shore. It was full of large fish. There were 153 of them! But in spite of there being so many fish, the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus said to us, "Come and eat some breakfast!" None of us dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because we knew that it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came and took the buns and gave them to us. He did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ That was the third time that Jesus appeared to *us* disciples after *God* caused him to become alive again after he died.

John 21:15-19

THEME: Jesus asked Peter three times if he really loved Jesus. Then Jesus told Peter how Peter would die.

¹⁵ When we had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "John's *son* Simon, do you love me more than these *other disciples do?*" Peter said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that you are dear to me (OR, that I love you)." Jesus said, "Give to *those who belong to me what they need spiritually, like* [MET] *a shepherd provides* food for his lambs." ¹⁶ Jesus said to him again, "John's *son* Simon, do you love me?" He replied, "Yes, Lord, you know that you are dear to me (OR, that I love you)." Jesus said to him, "Take care of *those who belong to me, like* [MET] *a shepherd takes care of his sheep.*" ¹⁷ Jesus

said to him a third time, “John’s son Simon, am I really dear to you (OR, do you really love me)?” Peter was grieved because Jesus asked him this three times, *and because the third time he changed the question*. He said, “Lord, you know everything. You know that you are dear to me (OR, that I love you).” Jesus said, “Give to *those who belong to me what they need spiritually, as [MET] a shepherd provides food for his sheep*.¹⁸ Now listen to this carefully: When you were young, you put your clothes on by yourself, and you went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your arms, and someone will fasten them *with a rope* and will lead you to a place where you do not want to go.”¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate how Peter would die *violently/on a cross* in order to honor God. Then Jesus said to him, “Keep being my faithful disciple *until you die*.”

John 21:20-23

THEME: *Peter asked Jesus what would happen to John.*

²⁰ Peter turned around and saw that I was following them. I was the one who leaned close to Jesus during the *Passover* meal and said, “Lord, who is going to enable your enemies to seize you?”²¹ When Peter saw me, he asked, “Lord, what is *going to happen to him?*”²² Jesus said to him, “If I want him to remain *alive* until I return, *that is not your concern!/what is that to you?*” [RHQ] You be my *faithful* disciple!”²³ Some of the other believers heard a *report of* what Jesus had said about me, and *they thought that Jesus meant* that I would not die. But Jesus did not say that I would not die. He said only, “If I want him to remain *alive* until I return, *that is not your concern!/what is that to you?*” [RHQ]”

John 21:24-25

THEME: *A statement about the truth and accuracy of this document.*

²⁴ *I, John*, am the disciple who has seen all these things and I have written them down.

We *elders of the congregation at Ephesus* know that what *John has written* is true.

²⁵ Jesus did many other things. If they would *all* be written {If people would write them *all*} down *in detail*, I suppose that the whole world would not have enough space [HYP] to contain the books that would be written {that they would write} *about what he did*.

The account of the first Christians, which we call the book of Acts

Acts 1:1-3

THEME: Luke referred to the Gospel he had written to Theophilus.

1 ¹ Dear Theophilus,

In my first book *that I wrote for you*, I wrote about many of the things that Jesus did and taught ² until the day on which he was taken {God took him} up to heaven. Before he went to heaven, as the Holy Spirit guided him, he told the apostles whom he had chosen *the things that he wanted them to know*. ³ After he had suffered and died on the cross, he became alive again. As he appeared to them often during the next forty days, the apostles saw him many times. He proved to them in many ways that he was alive again. He talked with them about how God would rule [MET] the lives of people who accepted him as their king.

Acts 1:4-5

THEME: Jesus commanded his apostles to wait for the Holy Spirit.

⁴ One time while he was with them, he told them, "Do not leave Jerusalem yet. Instead, wait here until my Father sends his Spirit [MTY] to you, as he promised to do. You have heard me speak to you about that. ⁵ John baptized people in water because they said that they wanted to change their lives, but after a few days [LIT] God will put the Holy Spirit within you to truly change your lives."

Acts 1:6-9

THEME: Jesus said that they would tell about him everywhere, and then he ascended to heaven.

⁶ One day when the apostles met together with Jesus, they asked him, "Lord, will you(sg) now become the King [MET] over us Israelite people like King David, who ruled long ago?" (OR, "Lord, will you(sg) now defeat the Romans and restore the kingdom to us Israelite people?") ⁷ He replied to them, "You do not need to know the time periods and days when that will happen. My Father alone has decided when he will make me king. ⁸ But you do need to know that the Holy Spirit will make you spiritually strong when he comes to live in you. Then you will powerfully tell people about me in Jerusalem and in all the other places in Judea district, in Samaria district, and in places far away all over [IDM] the world." ⁹ After he said that, he was taken {God took him} up to heaven, while they were watching. He went up into a cloud [PRS], which prevented them from seeing him anymore.

Acts 1:10-11

THEME: Angels told the apostles that Jesus would return later.

¹⁰ While the apostles were still staring towards the sky as he was going up, suddenly two men who were wearing white clothes stood beside them. They were angels. ¹¹ One of them said, "You men from Galilee district, <you do not need to stand here any longer looking up at the sky!/why do you still stand here looking up at the sky?> [RHQ] Some day this same Jesus, whom God took from you up to heaven, will come back to earth. He will return in the same manner as you just now saw him when he went up to heaven, but he will not return now."

Acts 1:12-14

THEME: The apostles and other believers often prayed together.

¹² Then after the two angels left, the apostles returned to Jerusalem from Olive Tree Hill, which was about <one kilometer/a half mile> [MTY] from Jerusalem. ¹³ When they entered the city, they went into the upstairs room in the house where they were staying. Those who were there included Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, another James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who belonged to the group that wanted to expel the Romans, and Judas the son of another man named James. ¹⁴ All these apostles agreed concerning the things about which they continually were praying together. Others who prayed with them included the women who had accompanied Jesus, Mary who was Jesus' mother, and his younger brothers.

Acts 1:15-17

THEME: Peter told them why someone must replace Judas.

¹⁵ During those days Peter stood up among his fellow believers. There were *at that place* a group of about 120 of Jesus' followers. He said, ¹⁶⁻¹⁷ "My fellow believers, *there are words that King David wrote* [MTY] in the Scriptures long ago that needed to be fulfilled {to happen as *he said they would*}. The Holy Spirit, *who knew that Judas would be the one who would fulfill those words*, told David what to write. ¹⁷ *Although* Judas had been chosen {Jesus had chosen Judas}, along with *the rest of us(exc)* to serve as an *apostle*, Judas was the person who guided the people who seized Jesus."

Acts 1:18-19

THEME: How Judas died.

¹⁸ *The Jewish leaders* gave Judas money when he *promised to* treacherously/wickedly *betray Jesus*. *Later Judas returned that money to them*. When Judas *hanged himself*, his body fell down *to the ground*. His abdomen burst open, and all his intestines spilled out. So the *Jewish leaders* bought a field *using that money*. ¹⁹ All the people who reside in Jerusalem heard *about that*, so they called that field according to their own *Aramaic* language, Akeldama, which means 'Field of Blood', *because it was where someone bled and died*.

Acts 1:20

THEME: Peter quoted from the Psalms about Judas.

²⁰ Peter also said, "I perceive that what happened to Judas is like what the writer of Psalms desired to happen: 'May his house become deserted, and may there be no one to live in it.' (OR, 'Judge him, Lord, so that neither he nor anyone else may live in his house!') And it seems that *these other words that David wrote also refer to Judas*: 'Let someone else take over his work as a leader.'

Acts 1:21-22

THEME: Peter concluded that they needed to choose a man to replace Judas.

²¹ "So it is necessary *for us apostles* to choose a man *to replace Judas*. *He must be one who* accompanied [MTY] us all the time when the Lord Jesus was with us. ²² *That would be from the time when John the Baptizer* baptized Jesus until the day when Jesus was taken {when God took Jesus} from us up *to heaven*. He must be one who saw Jesus alive again *after he died*."

Acts 1:23-26

THEME: Jesus' followers prayed and then chose Matthias to replace Judas.

²³ So the *apostles and other believers* suggested the names of two men who qualified. One man was Joseph, who was called {whom people called} Barsabbas (OR, Joseph Barsabbas) who *also* had the *Roman* name Justus. The other man was Matthias. ²⁴⁻²⁵ Then they prayed like this: "Lord Jesus, Judas stopped being an apostle. *He died and* went to the place where he *deserved to be* [EUP]. So *we(exc) need to choose someone to replace Judas in order* that he can serve *you(sg)* by becoming an apostle. You(sg) know what everyone is really like. So *please* show us which of these two men you have chosen." ²⁶ Then they cast lots *to choose between the two of them*, and the lot fell for Matthias. (OR, Then *one of the apostles* shook *in a container* small objects/stones *that they had marked to determine which man God had chosen*. And the small object/stone *that they had marked* for Matthias fell *out of the container*). So Matthias was considered {they considered Matthias} *to be an apostle* along with the *other* eleven apostles.

Acts 2:1-4

THEME: The Holy Spirit came and enabled the disciples to speak other languages.

2 ¹ On the day when *the Jews were celebrating Pentecost festival*, the *believers* were all together in one place in *Jerusalem*. ² Suddenly *they heard* a noise coming from the sky *that sounded* like a strong wind. Everyone in the entire house where they were sitting heard the noise. ³ Then they saw *what looked* like flames of fire. These flames separated *from one another*, and *one of them* came down on *the head of* each of the believers. ⁴ Then all of the believers were <completely controlled/empowered> by the Holy Spirit {the Holy Spirit <completely controlled/empowered> all of the believers}, and he enabled them to begin speaking other languages [MTY] *that they had not learned*.

Acts 2:5-13

THEME: *Jews from many places were amazed to hear their native languages spoken by the believers.*

⁵At that time many Jews were staying in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost festival. They were people who always tried to obey the Jewish laws. They had come from many different [HYP] countries. ⁶When they heard that loud noise like a wind, a crowd came together to the place where the believers were. The crowd <was amazed/did not know what to think>, because each of them was hearing one of the believers speaking in that person's own language. ⁷They were completely amazed, and they said to each other, "All these men who are speaking have [RHQ] always resided in Galilee district, so they would not know our languages. ⁸<We(inc) do not understand how these men can speak our own native languages!/How can these men speak our own native languages?> [RHQ] But all of us hear them doing that! ⁹Some of us are from the regions of Parthia and Media and Elam, and others of us reside in the regions of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia. ¹⁰There are some from Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the regions in Libya that are near Cyrene city. There are others of us who are here visiting Jerusalem from Rome. ¹¹They include native Jews as well as non-Jews who have accepted what we Jews believe. And others of us are from Crete Island and from the region of Arabia. So how is it that these people are speaking our languages [MTY], telling us about <the great/the mighty things> that God has done?" ¹²All those people were amazed, and did not know what to think about what was happening. So they asked one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³But some of them <made fun of/laughed at> those who believed in Jesus. They said, "These people are talking like this because they have drunk too much new wine!"

Acts 2:14-21

THEME: *Peter said that the prophet Joel foretold what the Holy Spirit would do.*

¹⁴So Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles and spoke loudly to the crowd of people, saying, "My fellow-Jews and you others who are staying in Jerusalem, listen to me, all of you, and I will explain to you what is happening! ¹⁵Some of you think that we(exc) are drunk, but we are not drunk. It is only nine o'clock in the morning, and people here never get drunk at this time in the day! ¹⁶Instead, what has happened to us is the miraculous thing that the prophet Joel wrote about long ago. Joel wrote:

God says, ¹⁷"During the last/final days before I judge all people, I will give my Spirit abundantly/generously to people [SYN] everywhere. As a result, your sons and daughters will tell people messages from me, the young men among you will see visions from me, and the old men among you will have dreams that I will give them. ¹⁸During those days I will abundantly/generously give my Spirit even to men and women believers who are my slaves/servants, so they can tell people messages from me. ¹⁹I will cause amazing things to happen in the sky, and I will do miracles on the earth that will show that I am powerful. Here on the earth [CHI] I will cause wars with blood, fire and thick/dark smoke everywhere. ²⁰In the sky the sun will appear dark to people and the moon will appear red to them. Those things will happen before the important and splendid/amazing day [MTY] when I, the Lord God, will come to judge everyone.

²¹Before that time, all those who ask me [MTY] to save them from the guilt of their sins will be saved {I, the Lord, will save all those who ask me [MTY] to save them from the guilt of their sins.}"

Acts 2:22-24

THEME: *Peter said, "You killed Jesus but God caused him to live again."*

²²Peter continued, "My fellow Israelites, listen to me! When Jesus from Nazareth town lived among you, God proved to you that he had sent him by enabling him to do many amazing miracles that showed that he was from God. You yourselves know that this is true. ²³Even though you knew that, you put this man Jesus into the hands of his enemies. However, God had already planned for that, and he knew all about it. Then you urged men [SYN] who do not obey God's law to kill Jesus. They did that by nailing him to a cross. ²⁴He suffered terribly when he died, but God did not let him continue to be dead, because it was not possible for him [PRS] to remain dead. God caused him to become alive again.

Acts 2:25-28

THEME: *David foretold that the Messiah would rejoice about becoming alive again.*

²⁵"Long ago King David wrote what the Messiah said,

I knew that you, Lord God, would always be near me. You are right beside [MTY] me, so I will not be afraid of those who want to harm me. ²⁶Because of that I [SYN] joyfully praise you, O God. And I am completely confident that you(sg) will <cause my body to become alive again/raise me from the dead>. ²⁷You will not allow my spirit to remain in the place where the dead are. You will not even let my body decay, because I am devoted to you and always obey you. ²⁸You have told me that you will cause my body to become alive again. You will make me very happy because you will be with me forever.

Acts 2:29-31

THEME: Peter explained that David wrote that the Messiah would become alive again.

²⁹ Peter continued, "My fellow-Jews, I can tell you confidently that *our royal ancestor, King David, died, and that his body was buried* [that people buried his body]. And the place *where they buried his body is still here today*. ³⁰ So *we(inc) know that David was not speaking those words about himself. But because he was a prophet, he spoke about the Messiah.* David knew that God had strongly promised him that he would cause one of his descendants to become king [MTY] like David was king. (OR, to be the Messiah who would rule God's people like David had ruled them.) David knew beforehand *what God would do, so he was able to say that God would cause the Messiah to live again after he died.* He said that God would not let the Messiah remain in the place of the dead, nor let his body decay."

Acts 2:32-35

THEME: Peter said, "Jesus has abundantly given us the Holy Spirit, shown by what you see and hear."

³² "After this man Jesus had died, God caused him to become alive again. All of us(exc), his followers, have seen and tell people that Jesus has become alive again. ³³ God has greatly honored Jesus by causing him to rule right beside him [MTY] in heaven. Jesus has received the Holy Spirit from God his Father, just like God promised. So Jesus has generously/abundantly given us the Holy Spirit, and he has shown that by what you are seeing and hearing. ³⁴ We(inc) know that David was not speaking about himself because David did not go up into heaven as Jesus did. Besides that, David himself said this about the Messiah:

The Lord God said to my Lord the Messiah, "Reign here beside me, ³⁵ while I completely defeat [MTY] your enemies."

Acts 2:36

THEME: Peter said, "Know surely that God has made this Jesus both Lord and Messiah."

³⁶ Peter concluded, "So I want you and all other Israelites [MTY] to acknowledge that God has caused this Jesus to be both our Lord/Ruler and the Messiah. But God considers that you are the ones who nailed Jesus to a cross."

Acts 2:37-40

THEME: Peter told them to repent, and said that believers would baptize them.

³⁷ When the people heard what Peter said, they felt very guilty [IDM]. So they asked him and the other apostles, "Fellow-countrymen, what should we(exc) do so that God will forgive us?"

³⁸ Peter answered them, "Each of you should turn away from your sinful behavior. Then we(exc) will baptize you, if you now believe in Jesus Christ. Then God will give you the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ God has promised to do that [MTY] for you and your descendants, and for all others who believe in him, even those who live far away from here. The Lord our God will give his Spirit to everyone whom he invites to become his people!" ⁴⁰ Peter spoke much more and spoke strongly/forcefully to them. He pleaded with them, "Ask God to save you so that he will not punish you when he punishes these evil people who have rejected Jesus!"

Acts 2:41-42

THEME: Many people became believers and joined the other believers.

⁴¹ So the people who believed Peter's message were baptized. There were about three thousand of those [SYN] who joined the group of believers that day. ⁴² They continually obeyed what the apostles taught, and they very frequently met together with the other believers. And they continually ate together and celebrated the Lord's Supper, and continually prayed together.

Acts 2:43-47

THEME: The apostles worked miracles, all the believers shared everything, and the Lord helped them.

⁴³ All the people [SYN] who were in Jerusalem were greatly reverencing God because the apostles were frequently doing many kinds of miraculous things. ⁴⁴ All of those who believed in Jesus were united and regularly met together. They were also sharing everything that they had with one another. ⁴⁵ From time to time some of them sold some of their land and some of the other things that they owned, and they would give some of the money from what they sold to others among them, according to what they needed. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued meeting together in the temple area. And every day they gladly and generously shared their food [SYN] with each other, as they ate together and celebrated the Lord's Supper in their houses. ⁴⁷ As they did so, they were praising God, and all the other people in Jerusalem were thinking favorably about them. As those things were happening, every day the Lord Jesus increased the number of people who were being saved [whom he was saving] from the guilt of their sins.

Acts 3:1-8

THEME: Peter healed a lame man, so the people were amazed.

3 ¹ One day Peter and John were going to the Temple courtyard. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, at the time when people prayed *there publicly*. ² There was a man there who had been lame from the time he was born. He was *sitting by the gate called Beautiful Gate*, at the entrance to the Temple area. People put him there every day, so that he could ask those who were entering *or leaving* the temple courtyard to give him some money.

³ As Peter and John were about to enter *the Temple courtyard*, he saw them and asked them several times to give him some money. (OR, he said to them several times, "Please give me some money!") ⁴ As Peter and John looked directly at him, Peter said to him, "Look at us!" ⁵ So he looked directly at them, expecting to get some *money* from them. ⁶ Then Peter said to him, "I do not have any money [MTY], but what I *can do*, I will *do* for you. Jesus Christ, *who was* from Nazareth town, has authorized [MTY] me *to heal you! So get up and walk!*" ⁷ Then Peter grasped his right hand and helped him to stand up. Immediately the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped up and began to walk! Then he entered the Temple area with them, walking and leaping and praising God!

Acts 3:9-10

THEME: The people were amazed.

⁹ All the people *there* saw him walking and praising God. ¹⁰ They recognized that he was the man who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate in the Temple courtyard and ask *people* for money! So all the people there were greatly amazed at what had happened to him. ¹¹ As the man clung to Peter and John, all the people were so surprised *that they did not know what to think!* So they ran to them at the place *in the Temple courtyard* that is called {that *people* call} Solomon's Porch.

Acts 3:12-16

THEME: Peter explained that Jesus healed the man, and they should repent.

¹² When Peter saw that, he said to them, "Fellow-Israelites, <you should not be surprised about what has happened to this man!/why are you so surprised about what has happened to this man?> [RHQ] And you should not stare at us, either! You seem to [RHQ] think that the two of us enabled this man to walk because we(exc) ourselves are powerful or because we please God very much! ¹³ So I will tell you *what is really happening*. Our ancestors, including Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, worshipped God. And now he has greatly honored Jesus, who always served him. Your *leaders* brought Jesus *to the governor, Pilate*, so that *his soldiers would kill him*. And *God considers that* in front of Pilate you *were the ones who rejected Jesus as your king*, after Pilate had decided that he should release Jesus. ¹⁴ *Although Jesus* always did what was right/just and good, you rejected him. *Pilate wanted to release him, but* you urgently asked Pilate to release <a murderer/someone who had killed people>! ¹⁵ *God considers that* you killed *Jesus*, the one who gives people *eternal* life. But God has greatly honored him <by causing him to become alive again after he died/by raising him from the dead>. Many of us saw *him after that, and now we(exc)* are telling *you* about it. ¹⁶ It is because *we two* trusted in what Jesus [MTY, PER] *could do, that he* made this man, whom you see and know, strong again. Yes, it is because we(exc) trusted in Jesus that he has completely healed this man for all of you to see."

Acts 3:17-26

THEME: Peter told them to repent.

¹⁷ "Now, my fellow-countrymen, I know that you and your leaders did that *to Jesus* because you *and they* did not know *that he was the Messiah*. ¹⁸ However, *your putting him to death* was how God let people do what he had predicted that they would do. *Long ago* he told all the prophets [MTY] to write *what people would do to the Messiah*. *They wrote* that the Messiah, whom God *would send*, would suffer *and die*. ¹⁹ So, turn away from your sinful behavior and ask God *to help you* do what pleases *him*, in order that he may completely forgive you for your sins. ²⁰ *If you do that*, there will be times *when you will know that* the Lord God *is helping you*. And some day he will *again* send back *to earth* the Messiah, whom he appointed for you. That person is Jesus. ²¹ Jesus must stay in heaven until the time when God will cause all that he has created to become new. *Long ago* God promised *to do that, and* he chose holy prophets to tell *that to people*. ²² For example, *the prophet Moses* said *this about the Messiah*: 'The Lord <your God/the God whom you *worship*> will cause someone to become a prophet to tell you *words from God*. *God will send him* as *he sent* me, *and he will be* from among your own people. You must listen to everything that this prophet tells you *and obey him* [SYN]. ²³ *Those who* do not listen to *that prophet and obey him* will no longer belong to God's people, and *God will get rid of them*.'" ²⁴ *Peter continued*, "All the prophets have told *about what would happen during* these days [MTY] *in which we(inc)* are living. *Those prophets include Samuel and all the others who* later also spoke *about these events* before they happened. ²⁵ You *as well as we(exc)* are the people *to whom God sent the Messiah*, as the prophets said [MTY] *that he would*. And when God strongly promised to *bless* our ancestors, he also surely promised to *bless* you. He said to Abraham *concerning the Messiah*, 'I will *bless* all people on the earth as a result of *what* your descendant *will do*.'" ²⁶ *Peter concluded*, "So when God sent *to the earth* <Jesus, the one who always obeys him/his servant Jesus>, he sent him first to you *Israelites* to *bless* you. *God will* enable you to stop doing what is wicked *and to start doing what pleases him*."

Acts 4:1-4

THEME: Jewish leaders arrested Peter and John, but many people became believers.

4 ¹ Meanwhile, in the temple courtyard, there were some priests, the officer who was in charge of the temple police, and also some [SYN] Sadducee sect members. These men came to Peter and John while the two of them were speaking to the people. ² These men were very angry, because the two apostles were teaching the people about Jesus. What they were telling them was that because *◀God caused Jesus to become alive again/God raised Jesus from the dead▶*, God would cause other people who had died to become alive again. ³ So those officials seized Peter and John. Then they put them in jail. *They had to wait* until the next day to question Peter and John, because it was already evening and it was contrary to their Jewish law to question people at night. ⁴ However, many people who had heard the message from Peter believed in Jesus. (OR, But many people had already believed in Jesus, because they had heard the message from Peter.) So the number of men who believed in Jesus increased to about five thousand.

Acts 4:5-7

THEME: Jewish leaders questioned Peter and John about healing the lame man.

⁵ The next day the high priest summoned the other chief priests, the teachers of the Jewish laws, and the other members of the Jewish Council, and they gathered together in one place in Jerusalem. ⁶ Annas, the former high priest, Caiaphas who was the new high priest, two other former high priests whose names were John and Alexander, and other men who were related to the high priest were there. ⁷ They commanded guards to bring Peter and John into the courtroom [MTY] and have them stand in front of them. Then one of the leaders questioned the two of them, saying, "Who do you two claim gave you the power to heal this man? And who authorized [MTY] you to do this [DOU]?"

Acts 4:8-12

THEME: Peter told them that Jesus healed the man and only Jesus could save people.

⁸ So as the Holy Spirit completely controlled Peter, he said to them, "You fellow-Israelites who rule us and all of you other elders, listen! ⁹ Today you are questioning us concerning our performing a good deed for a man who was crippled, and you asked us how he became healed. ¹⁰ So we (exc) want you and all of our other fellow-Israelites to know this: It is because Jesus the Messiah [MTY] from Nazareth healed him that this man is able to stand before you. God considers that it was you who nailed Jesus to a cross, but God caused him to become alive again. ¹¹ In the Scriptures they wrote this about the Messiah:

He is like [MET] the stone that was rejected by the builders {that the builders rejected}.

But that stone became the most important stone in that building.

Jesus is that stone, and you are those builders who threw away the stone that was the most important one. ¹² So he alone can save us [MTY]. God has sent only one person [MTY] into the world who can save us from the guilt of our sins, and that person is Jesus!"

Acts 4:13-14

THEME: The Jewish leaders realized that Peter and John had been associating with Jesus.

¹³ The Jewish leaders realized that Peter and John *◀were not afraid of them/spoke boldly▶*. They also learned that the two men were ordinary people who had not studied in schools. So the leaders were amazed, and they realized that these men had associated with Jesus. ¹⁴ They also saw the man who had been healed standing there with the two of them, so they were not able to say anything to oppose Peter and John.

Acts 4:15-18

THEME: The Jewish leaders commanded the two apostles to stop teaching people about Jesus.

¹⁵ So the Jewish leaders commanded guards to take Peter, John, and the man outside of the room where those leaders were meeting. After they did so, the leaders talked with each other about Peter and John. ¹⁶ Being frustrated, one after another, said, "◀There is really nothing that we can do to punish these two men!/How can we (inc) do anything to punish these two men?▶ [RHQ] Almost everyone [HYP] who is living in Jerusalem knows that they have done an amazing miracle, so we cannot tell people that it did not happen! ¹⁷ However, we must not allow other people to hear about this miracle. So we must tell these men that we will punish them if they continue to tell other people about this [MTY] man who they say gave them the power to do it." ¹⁸ So the Jewish leaders commanded guards to bring the two apostles into that room again. After they did so, they commanded them both that they should never speak about Jesus, and they should not teach anyone about him [MTY] again.

Acts 4:19-20

THEME: *Peter and John said that they needed to continue speaking about Jesus.*

¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, "Would God think that it is right for us two to obey you and not to obey him? We(exc) will let you decide what you think is proper. ²⁰ But as for us, we cannot obey you. We will not stop telling people about the things that we(exc) have seen Jesus do and what we have heard him teach."

Acts 4:21-22

THEME: *The Jewish leaders threatened to punish Peter and John and then released them.*

²¹⁻²² Then the Jewish leaders again told Peter and John not to disobey them. But all the people there were praising God about what had happened to the lame man. They knew that only God could have enabled Peter and John to miraculously heal the man, because the man was more than forty years old and he was lame when his mother bore him. They also knew that the people would become angry if they punished the two apostles. So, because they could not decide how to punish Peter and John, they finally let them go.

Acts 4:23-28

THEME: *The believers talked to God about those who opposed him and them.*

²³ After Peter and John had been released, they went to the other believers and reported all that the chief priests and other Jewish elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard that, they all agreed as they prayed to God, and one of them prayed, "O Lord! You(sg) made the sky, the earth and the oceans, and everything in them. ²⁵ The Holy Spirit caused our ancestor, King David [MTY], who served you, to write these words:

It is ridiculous [RHQ] that the non-Jews became angry and the Israelite people planned uselessly against God.

²⁶ The kings in the world prepared to fight God's Ruler, and the other rulers assembled together with them to oppose the Lord God and the one whom he had appointed to be the Messiah.

²⁷ "We know that what you(sg) said long ago was true, because King Herod and the governor, Pontius Pilate, and many other people, both non-Jews and Israelites, assembled together here in this city. They planned to kill Jesus, who devotedly served you and whom you appointed [MTY] to be the Messiah. ²⁸ Because you(sg) are all-powerful, those people did only what you [SYN] allowed them to do. It was what you decided long ago would happen."

Acts 4:29-30

THEME: *The believers asked God to help them speak boldly to people about Jesus.*

²⁹ "So now, Lord, listen to what they are saying about punishing us! Help us who serve you(sg) to very boldly speak messages from you(sg) about Jesus! ³⁰ Also, by your power [MTY] miraculously heal sick people and do other amazing miracles [SYN] that show people your power! Ask Jesus, who always serves you, to give us the authority [MTY] to do such miracles!"

Acts 4:31

THEME: *God shook the place where they were, and his Spirit enabled them to speak his words boldly.*

³¹ When the believers had finished praying, the place where they were meeting shook. All of them were <completely controlled/empowered> by the Holy Spirit {the Holy Spirit <completely controlled/empowered> all of them}, with the result that they began to speak boldly the words that God told them to speak.

Acts 4:32-35

THEME: *The believers shared everything, and the apostles told others about Jesus.*

³² The group of people who had believed in Jesus were completely agreed about what they thought and what they wanted/desired. Not one of them claimed that he alone owned anything. Instead, they shared with one another everything that they had. ³³ The apostles continued to tell others, very powerfully, that God had <caused the Lord Jesus to become alive again/raised the Lord Jesus from the dead>. People knew that God was graciously helping all the believers. ³⁴ Some of the believers who owned land or houses would occasionally sell some of their property. Then they would bring the money for what they sold ³⁵ and they would present it to the apostles [MTY]. Then the apostles would give money to any believer who needed it. So no one among the believers was lacking anything.

Acts 4:36-37

THEME: *Joseph Barnabas sold a field and brought the money to the apostles.*

³⁶ For example, there was Joseph. He was a descendant of Levi and he was born on Cyprus Island. The apostles called him Barnabas; in the Jewish language that name means a person who [IDM] always encourages others. ³⁷ He sold one of his fields, and brought the money to the apostles for them to distribute to other believers.

Acts 5:1-2

THEME: *Ananias pretended to give the apostles all the money from selling a field.*

5 ¹ But there was one of the believers whose name was Ananias, and whose wife's name was Sapphira. He also sold some land. ² He kept for himself some of the money he had received for the land, and his wife knew that he had done that. Then he brought the rest of the money and presented it to the apostles [MTY].

Acts 5:3-6

THEME: *People were terrified when they saw or heard that Ananias had died.*

³ Then Peter said, "Ananias, you(sg) let Satan completely control you [MTY] so that you(sg) tried to deceive the Holy Spirit and us(exc). ◀That was terrible!/Why did you do such a terrible thing?▶ [RHQ] You have kept for yourself some of the money you(sg) received for selling the land, pretending that you(sg) were giving us all of it. ⁴ Before you(sg) sold that land, you truly owned [RHQ] it. And after you sold it, you could [RHQ] certainly still have used the money any way you wanted to. So why did you(sg) ever think [RHQ] about doing this wicked thing? You were not merely trying to deceive us! No, you tried to deceive God himself!" ⁵ When Ananias heard that, immediately he fell down dead. So all who were there who heard about Ananias' death became terrified [PRS]. ⁶ Some young men came in, wrapped his body with a sheet, and carried it out and buried it.

Acts 5:7-11

THEME: *Sapphira also died because she lied, and some men buried her beside her husband.*

⁷ About three hours later, his wife came in, but she did not know what had happened. ⁸ As Peter showed her the money that Ananias had brought, he asked her, "Tell me, is this the amount of money you two received for the land you sold?" She said, "Yes, that's what we(exc) received." ⁹ So Peter said to her, "You both did a terrible thing! You two agreed [RHQ] to try to determine if you could do that without the Spirit of the Lord God revealing to anyone that you two tried to deceive them! Listen! Do you(sg) hear the footsteps [SYN] of the men who buried your husband? They are right outside this door, and they will carry your corpse out to bury it, too!" ¹⁰ Immediately Sapphira fell down dead at Peter's feet. Then the young men came in. When they saw that she was dead, they carried her body out and buried it beside her husband's body.

¹¹ So all the believers in Jerusalem became greatly frightened [PRS] because of what God had done to Ananias and Sapphira. And all the others who heard people tell about those things also became greatly frightened.

Acts 5:12-16

THEME: *The apostles healed many people, and many people believed in Jesus.*

¹² God was enabling the apostles to do many amazing miracles among the people. All the believers were meeting together regularly in the temple courtyard at the place called Solomon's Porch. ¹³ All of the other people who had not yet believed in Jesus were afraid to associate with the believers, because they knew that if they did anything evil, God would punish them, as well as revealing it to the believers. However, those people continued to greatly respect the believers. ¹⁴ Many more men and women started believing in the Lord Jesus, and they joined the group of believers. ¹⁵ The apostles were doing amazing miracles, so people were bringing those who were sick into the streets and laying them on stretchers and mats, in order that when Peter came by he would touch them, or at least his shadow might come upon some of them and heal them. ¹⁶ Crowds of people were also coming to the apostles from the towns near Jerusalem. They were bringing their sick relatives/friends and those who were being tormented/troubled by evil spirits {whom evil spirits were tormenting/troubling}, and God healed all of them.

Acts 5:17-21a

THEME: *Jewish leaders jailed the apostles, but an angel freed them to teach people.*

¹⁷ Then the high priest and all who were with him, who were members of the local Sadducee sect in Jerusalem, became very jealous of the apostles, because many people were accepting the apostles' message. ¹⁸ So they commanded the Temple guards to seize the apostles and put them in the public jail. ¹⁹ The guards did that, but during the night an angel from the Lord God opened the jail doors and brought the apostles outside! The guards were not aware of what the angel had done. ²⁰ Then the angel said to the apostles, "Go to the Temple courtyard, stand there, and tell the people all about

how God can give them eternal life!"²¹ So having heard this, about dawn they entered the Temple courtyard and began to teach the people again about Jesus.

Acts 5:21b-24

THEME: *The Jewish leaders were perplexed because the apostles were not in jail.*

Meanwhile, the high priest and those who were with him summoned the other Jewish Council members. Altogether they made up the entire council of Israel. *After they all gathered together*, they sent *guards* to the jail to bring in the apostles.

²² But when the guards arrived at the jail, they discovered that the apostles were not there. So they returned to the council, and *one of them* reported, ²³ "We(exc) saw that the jail doors were very securely locked, and the guards were standing at the doors. But when we opened *the doors and went in to get those men*, none of them was inside *the jail!*" ²⁴ When the captain of the temple guards and the chief priests heard that, they became greatly perplexed, *wondering* what might result from all this.

Acts 5:25-26

THEME: *After finding them, the leaders brought the apostles back to question them.*

²⁵ Then someone came *from the Temple courtyard* and excitedly reported to them, "Listen to this! *Right now* the men whom you put in jail are standing in the Temple courtyard and they are teaching the people *about Jesus!*" ²⁶ So the captain of the Temple guards went to the Temple courtyard with the officers, and they brought the apostles *back to the council room*. But they did not treat them roughly, because they were afraid that the people would *kill them* by throwing stones at them *if they hurt the apostles*.

Acts 5:27-33

THEME: *Peter and the other apostles said that they must obey God.*

²⁷ After the captain and his officers had brought the apostles to the council room, they commanded them to stand in front of the council members, and the high priest questioned them. ²⁸ He said to them *accusingly*, "We(exc) strongly commanded you not to teach people about that man [MTY] Jesus! But *you have disobeyed us*, and you have taught people all over Jerusalem *about him!* Furthermore, you are trying to make it seem that we(exc) are the ones who are guilty [MTY] for that man's death!" ²⁹ But Peter, *speaking for himself* and the other apostles, replied, "We(exc) have to obey *what God commands us to do*, not what you people tell us to do!" ³⁰ God considers that **you** are the ones who killed Jesus by nailing him to a cross! But God, whom our ancestors *worshipped*, *caused Jesus to become alive again after he died/raised Jesus from the dead*. ³¹ God has greatly honored Jesus. *He has taken him up to heaven! He has authorized him* to be the one who will save us and to rule over our lives! *God did this* so that he might enable us Israelites [MTY] to turn away from our sinful behavior and *that he might forgive us for our sins*. ³² We(exc) tell people about these things *that we know happened to Jesus*, and the Holy Spirit, whom God has sent to us who obey him, is also confirming *that these things are true*." ³³ When the council members heard those words, they became very angry *with the apostles*, and they wanted to kill them.

Acts 5:34-40

THEME: *After beating the apostles, they followed Gamaliel's advice and released them.*

³⁴ But *there was a council member* named Gamaliel. He was a Pharisee, and one who taught people the Jewish laws, and all the Jewish people respected him. He stood up in the council and told *guards* to take the apostles out of the room for a short time. ³⁵ After the guards had taken the apostles out, he said to the other council members, "Fellow Israelites, you need to think carefully about what you want to do to these men, *and I will tell you why*." ³⁶ Some years ago a *man named Theudas rebelled against the Roman government*. He told people that he was an important person, and about four hundred men joined him. *But he was killed {soldiers killed him}* and all those who had been accompanying him were scattered. *So they were not able to do anything that they had planned*. ³⁷ After that, during the time when they were *writing down names of the people/taking the census* in order to tax people, a *man named Judas from Galilee province rebelled against the Roman government*. He persuaded some people to accompany him. But *soldiers* killed him, too, and all those who had accompanied him went off in different directions. ³⁸ So now I say *this* to you: Do not harm these men! Release them! I say this because if *this is just something* that humans have planned, they will not be able to do it. They will fail, *like Theudas and Judas did!* ³⁹ But, if **God has commanded them to do it**, you will not be able to prevent them *from doing it*, because you will find out that you are opposing God!" The other members of the council accepted what Gamaliel said. ⁴⁰ They told the *temple guards to bring the apostles and beat/flog them*. So the guards brought them *into the council room* and beat/flogged them. Then the council members commanded them not to speak to people about [MTY] Jesus, and they released the apostles.

Acts 5:41-42

THEME: The apostles rejoiced and continued to tell others about Jesus.

⁴¹ So the apostles went out from the council. They were rejoicing, because *they knew God* had honored them by letting people disgrace them because they were followers [MTY] of Jesus. ⁴² And every day *the apostles went to the temple area and to various people's houses, and they continued [LIT] teaching people and telling them that Jesus is the Messiah.*

Acts 6:1

THEME: The believers neglected the Greek-speaking widows.

6 ¹ During that time, many more people were becoming believers. *Some of them were from other countries and spoke only the Greek language, but most of them had always lived in Israel and spoke the Hebrew language.* Those who spoke Greek began to complain about those who spoke Hebrew. They were saying, "When you *Hebrew-speaking believers* distribute food or money to widows every day, you are not giving fair amounts to the widows who speak Greek!"

Acts 6:2-4

THEME: The apostles told the other believers to choose men to care for those widows.

² So, *after the twelve apostles had heard what they were saying,* they summoned all the *other believers in Jerusalem to meet* together. Then the apostles said to them, "We(exc) would not be doing right if we stopped *preaching and teaching* God's message about Jesus in order to distribute food [MTY] and money to the widows! ³ So, fellow believers, carefully choose seven men from among you, men whom you know that the Spirit of God controls completely and who are very wise. Then we(exc) will appoint them to do this work, ⁴ and we(exc) will use our time to pray and to preach and teach the message about Jesus."

Acts 6:5-6

THEME: The apostles appointed seven men to care for the widows' needs.

⁵ What the apostles recommended pleased all of the *other believers.* So they chose Stephen. He was a man who strongly believed in God and whom the Holy Spirit controlled completely. *They also chose Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas who was from Antioch city.* Nicolas had accepted the Jewish religion before he had believed in Jesus. ⁶ They brought these seven men to the apostles. Then after the apostles prayed for those men, they placed their hands on the heads of each one of them to appoint them to do that work.

Acts 6:7

THEME: The number of people who were becoming believers increased greatly.

⁷ So the believers continued to tell many people the message from God. <The number of people in Jerusalem who believed in Jesus was increasing greatly./More and more people in Jerusalem were believing in Jesus.> Among them were many Jewish priests who were believing the message about Jesus.

Acts 6:8-10

THEME: People opposed Stephen, but could not refute his arguments.

⁸ God was enabling Stephen to do many things by God's power. He was doing many amazing miracles among the Jewish people. ⁹ However, some people opposed Stephen. They were Jews from a group that regularly met together in a Jewish meeting place that was {that people} called the Freedmen's Meeting Place. *Those people were from Cyrene and Alexandria cities and also from Cilicia and Asia provinces.* They all began to argue with Stephen. ¹⁰ But they were not able <to refute what he said/to prove that what he said was wrong>, because God's Spirit enabled him to speak very wisely.

Acts 6:11-14

THEME: People persuaded some men to falsely accuse Stephen.

¹¹ Then they secretly persuaded some men to falsely accuse Stephen. *Those men said,* "We(exc) heard him say bad things about Moses and God." ¹² So, by saying that, they made the other Jewish people angry at Stephen, including the elders and the teachers of the Jewish laws. Then they all seized Stephen and took him to the Jewish Council. ¹³ They also brought in some men who accused him falsely about several things. They said, "This fellow continually says bad things about this holy Temple and about the laws that Moses received from God." ¹⁴ Specifically, we(exc) have heard him say that this Jesus from Nazareth town will destroy this Temple and will tell us to obey different customs than Moses taught our ancestors."

Acts 6:15

THEME: The people saw Stephen's face shining like the face of an angel.

¹⁵When all the people who were sitting in the council room heard that, and as they all stared at Stephen, they saw that his face was *shining* [SIM] like the face of an angel.

Acts 7:1-4

THEME: Stephen started to answer the high priest's accusations by talking about Abraham.

7 ¹Then the high priest asked Stephen, "Are the things that *these people are saying about you*(sg) true?" ²Stephen replied, "Fellow Jews and respected leaders, *please* listen to me! The glorious God *whom we*(inc) *worship* appeared to our ancestor Abraham while he was still *living* in Mesopotamia region, before he moved to Haran town. ³God said to him, 'Leave this land where you(sg) and your relatives *are living*, and go into the land to which I will lead you.' ⁴So Abraham left that land, *which was also called* Chaldea, and he arrived in Haran town and lived there. After his father died, God told him to move to this land in which you *and I* are now living.

Acts 7:5

THEME: God promised to give the land to Abraham and his descendants.

⁵"At that time God did not give Abraham any *land here*, not even a small plot of *this land* that would belong to him. God promised that he would *later* give this land to him and his descendants, and that it would *always* belong to *them*. *However*, at that time Abraham did not have any children *who would* <inherit it/receive it after he died>.

Acts 7:6-7

THEME: God told Abraham that later on he would deliver his descendants from Egypt.

⁶"Later God told Abraham, 'Your descendants will go and live in a foreign country. They *will live there* for four hundred years, and *during that time their leaders* will mistreat your descendants and force them to work as slaves. ⁷But God *also* said, 'I will punish the people who make them work as slaves. Then, after that, your descendants will leave *that land* and they will *come and worship* me in this land.'

Acts 7:8

THEME: God commanded the ceremony of circumcision for Abraham and his descendants.

⁸"Then God commanded Abraham that *every male in his household and all of his male descendants* should be circumcised *to show that they all belonged to God* and that they would obey what he had told Abraham to do. Later Abraham's son, Isaac, was born, and when Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him. *Later* Isaac's son, Jacob, was born, and Isaac *similarly circumcised* him. And Jacob *similarly circumcised* his twelve sons. They are the twelve men *from whom we*(inc) *Jews have all descended*.

Acts 7:9-10

THEME: God helped Joseph, so Pharaoh appointed him to govern Egypt.

⁹"You know that Jacob's *older* sons became jealous *because their father favored their younger brother* Joseph. So they sold him *to merchants/traders who took him* [MTY] to Egypt. There he became a slave *of an official who lived there*. But God *helped* Joseph. ¹⁰He protected him whenever people caused him to suffer. He enabled Joseph to be wise; and he caused Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to think well of Joseph. So Pharaoh appointed him to rule *over* Egypt and to look after all of Pharaoh's property [MTY].

Acts 7:11-15a

THEME: There was a famine in Canaan, so Jacob's family moved to Egypt.

¹¹"While Joseph was doing that work, there was a time <when there was very little food/of famine> throughout Egypt and also throughout Canaan. People did not have enough food to eat. People were suffering. *At that time* Jacob and his sons *in Canaan* also could not find *enough* food. ¹²When Jacob heard *people report that* there was grain/food *that people could buy* in Egypt, he sent Joseph's older brothers *to go there to buy grain*. *They went and bought grain from Joseph, but they did not recognize him. Then they returned home*. ¹³When Joseph's brothers went to Egypt the second time, *they again bought grain from Joseph*. But this time *he* told them who he was. *And* people told Pharaoh that Joseph's people were Hebrews *and that those men who had come from Canaan were his brothers*. ¹⁴Then after Joseph sent *his brothers back home*, they told their father Jacob *that Joseph wanted* him and his entire family to come *to Egypt*. *At that time* <Jacob's

family consisted of seventy-five people/there were seventy-five people in Jacob's family> [SYN]. ¹⁵ So when Jacob heard that, he and all his family went to live in Egypt.

Acts 7:15b-16

THEME: *When Jacob and his sons died, people buried them in Canaan.*

"Later on, Jacob died there, and our other ancestors, his sons, also died there. ¹⁶ But the bodies of Jacob and Joseph were brought {they brought the bodies of Jacob and Joseph} back to our land, and Jacob's body was buried {they buried Jacob's body} in the tomb that Abraham had bought, and they buried Joseph's body in Shechem in the ground that Jacob had bought from Hamor's sons.

Acts 7:17-19

THEME: *An Egyptian king who did not know about Joseph began to oppress the Israelites.*

¹⁷ "Our ancestors had become very numerous when it was almost time for God to rescue them from Egypt, as he had promised Abraham that he would do. ¹⁸ Another king had begun to rule in Egypt. He did not know that Joseph, long before that time, had greatly helped the people of Egypt [MTY]. ¹⁹ That king cruelly tried to get rid of our ancestors. He oppressed them and caused them to suffer greatly. He even commanded them to leave their baby boys outside their homes so that they would die.

Acts 7:20-22

THEME: *Moses, who grew up as an Egyptian, spoke and acted powerfully.*

²⁰ "During that time Moses was born, and he was a very beautiful [LIT] child. So his parents secretly cared for him in their house for three months. ²¹ Then they had to put him outside the house, but Pharaoh's daughter found him and adopted him and cared for him as though he were her own son. ²² Moses was taught {The Egyptian teachers taught Moses} many kinds of wise things [HYP] that the people in Egypt knew, and when he grew up, he spoke powerfully and did things powerfully.

Acts 7:23-29

THEME: *Moses killed an Egyptian, so he had to flee to Midian.*

²³ "One day when Moses was about forty years old, he decided that he would go and see his fellow Israelites. So he went to the place where they worked. ²⁴ He saw an Egyptian beating one of the Israelites. So he went over to help [MTY] the Israelite man who was being hurt/beat {whom the Egyptian was hurting/beating}, and he <got revenge on/paid back> the Israelite man by killing the Egyptian who was hurting/beating him. ²⁵ Moses was thinking that his fellow Israelites would understand that God had sent him to free them from being slaves. But they did not understand that. ²⁶ The next day, Moses saw two Israelite men fighting each other. He tried to make them stop fighting by saying to them, 'Men, you two are fellow Israelites! So <stop hurting each other!/why are you hurting each other?> [RHQ]' ²⁷ But the man who was injuring the other man pushed Moses away and said to him, '<No one appointed you(sg) to rule and judge us(exc)!/Do you(sg) think someone appointed you(sg) to rule and judge us(exc)?> [RHQ]' ²⁸ Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' ²⁹ When Moses heard that, he thought to himself, 'Obviously, people know what I have done, and someone will kill me.' He was afraid, so he fled from Egypt to Midian land. He lived there for some years. He got married, and he and his wife had two sons.

Acts 7:30-34

THEME: *God commanded Moses to rescue the Jewish people from Egypt.*

³⁰ "One day forty years later, the Lord God appeared as an angel to Moses. He appeared in a bush that was burning in the desert near Sinai Mountain. ³¹ When Moses saw that, he was greatly surprised, because the bush was not burning up. As he went over to look more closely, he heard the Lord God say to him, ³² 'I am the God whom your ancestors worshipped. I am the God that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob worship.' Moses was so afraid that he began to shake. He was afraid to look at the bush any longer. ³³ Then the Lord God said to him, 'Take your sandals off to show that you(sg) reverence me. Because I am here, the place where you are standing is holy/sacred. ³⁴ I have surely seen how the people of Egypt are continually causing my people to suffer. I have heard my people when they groan because those people continually oppress them. So I have come down to rescue them from Egypt. Now get ready, because I am going to send you back to Egypt to do that.'"

Acts 7:35-38

THEME: *God sent Moses to lead Israel and tell them of the Prophet who would come.*

³⁵ "This Moses is the one who had tried to help our Israelite people, but whom they rejected by saying, 'No one [RHQ] appointed you to rule and judge us!' Moses is the one whom God himself sent to rule them and to free them from being

slaves. *He is the one whom an angel in the bush commanded to do that.* ³⁶ *Moses is the one who led our ancestors out from Egypt.* He did many kinds of miracles in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and during the forty years *that the Israelite people lived in the desert.* ³⁷ This Moses is the one who said to the Israelite people, 'God will appoint a prophet for you from among your own people. *He will speak words from God, just like I speak his words to you.*' ³⁸ This man Moses was *our people's leader* when they gathered together in the desert. It is Moses to whom *God sent* the angel on Mount Sinai to *give him our laws*, and *he was the one who told our other ancestors what the angel had said.* He was the one who received *from God* words that tell us how to live *eternally*, and Moses passed *them* on to us.

Acts 7:39-43

THEME: *Israel rejected Moses, so God rejected them and said that he would punish them.*

³⁹ "However, our ancestors did not want to obey Moses. Instead, *while he was still on the mountain*, they rejected him as *their leader* and decided that they wanted to return to Egypt. ⁴⁰ So they told *his older brother* Aaron, 'Make idols for us who will be our gods to lead us *back to Egypt!* As for that fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt—we(*exc*) do not know what has happened to him!' ⁴¹ So, they made an image *out of gold that looked like* a calf. Then they sacrificed *animals and offered other things* to honor that idol, and they sang and danced to honor the idol that they themselves had made. ⁴² So God rejected them. He abandoned them to worship the sun, moon and stars in the sky. This agrees with the words that one of the prophets wrote that *God said*,

You Israelite *people* [MTY], when you *repeatedly* killed animals and offered them as sacrifices during those forty years *that you were in the desert*, <you *most certainly* were not offering them to me!what makes you think that you were offering them to me?> [RHQ] ⁴³ *On the contrary*, you carried *with you from place to place* the tent *that contained the idol* representing *the god* Moloch *that you worshipped*. You also carried *with you* the image of the star called Rephan. Those were idols that you had made, *and you worshipped them instead of me*. So I will *cause you to be taken away* {people to take you} *from your own country*. You will be taken {They will take you} *far from your homes to regions* even farther than Babylon country.

Acts 7:44-47

THEME: *The Israelite people worshipped God at the tent Moses built and later in the temple that Solomon built.*

⁴⁴ "While our ancestors were in the desert, they worshipped God at the tent that showed *that he was there with them*. They had made the tent exactly like God had commanded Moses *to make it*. It was exactly like the model that Moses had seen *when he was up on the mountain*. ⁴⁵ *Later on*, other ancestors of ours carried that tent with them when Joshua led them *into this land*. That was during the time that they took this land for themselves, when God forced the people *who previously lived here* to leave. So the Israelites were able to possess this land. *The tent remained in this land and was still here* when King David ruled. ⁴⁶ David pleased God, and he asked God to let him build a house where *he and all of our Israelite people* could worship God. ⁴⁷ But *instead*, *God let David's son* Solomon build a house *where people could worship* God.

Acts 7:48-50

THEME: *People can worship God anywhere, not only at certain places.*

⁴⁸ "However, *we(inc)* know that God is greater than everything, and he does not live in *houses that people* [SYN] have made. It is like the prophet *Isaiah* wrote. He wrote *these words that God had spoken*:

⁴⁹⁻⁵⁰ Heaven is <my throne/the place from which I rule the entire universe>, and the earth is <my footstool/*merely like* a stool on which I may rest my feet>. I myself [SYN] have made everything *both in heaven and on the earth*. So you *human beings*, <you really cannot build a house that would be *adequate* for me!do you think you can build a house that would be *appropriate* for me?> [RHQ] You cannot [RHQ] make a place good enough for me *to live in!*

Acts 7:51-53

THEME: *Stephen said that those who were listening to him were opposing God.*

⁵¹ "You people are extremely stubborn [MET], not wanting to obey God or listen [MTY] *to him!* You are exactly like your ancestors! You always resist the Holy Spirit *as they did!* ⁵² Your ancestors caused [RHQ] every prophet to suffer, *including* Moses. They even killed those who long ago announced *that the Messiah* would come, the one who always did what pleased God. *And the Messiah has come! He is the one whom you recently turned over to his enemies and insisted that they kill him!* ⁵³ You *are the people* who have received God's laws. *Those were laws* that God caused angels to give *to our ancestors*. However, *incredibly*, you have not obeyed them!"

Acts 7:54

THEME: *All the people there became very angry with Stephen.*

⁵⁴ When the Jewish Council members *and others there* heard all that *Stephen said*, they became very angry. They were grinding their teeth *together because they were so angry* at him!

Acts 7:55-59

THEME: *After Stephen said that he could see Jesus standing beside God in heaven, they stoned him.*

⁵⁵ But the Holy Spirit completely controlled Stephen. He looked up into heaven and saw a dazzling light from God, and he saw Jesus standing at God's right side. ⁵⁶ "Look," he said, "I see heaven open, and I see the one who came from heaven standing at God's right side!"

⁵⁷ When the Jewish Council members and others heard that, they shouted loudly. They put their hands over their ears so that they could not hear him, and immediately they all rushed at him. ⁵⁸ They dragged him outside the city of Jerusalem and started to throw stones at him. The people who were accusing him took off their outer garments in order to throw stones more easily, and they put their clothes on the ground next to a young man whose name was Saul, so that he could guard them. ⁵⁹ While they continued to throw stones at Stephen, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

Acts 7:60-8:3

THEME: *He asked the Lord to forgive them and he died. The disciples fled, some men buried Stephen, and Saul harassed believers. But the believers preached about Jesus wherever they were scattered.*

⁶⁰ Then Stephen fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not punish them (OR, forgive them) [LIT] for this sin!" After he had said that, he died. **8** ¹⁻² Then some men who revered God buried Stephen's body in a tomb, and they mourned greatly and loudly for him.

On that same day people started severely persecuting the believers who were living in Jerusalem. So most of the believers fled to other places throughout Judea and Samaria provinces. The apostles were the only believers who remained in Jerusalem. ³ While they were killing Stephen, Saul was there approving that they should kill Stephen. So Saul also began trying to destroy the group of believers. He entered houses one by one, he dragged away men and women who believed in Jesus, and then he arranged for them to be put in prison.

Acts 8:4-8

THEME: *Many Samaritans heeded Philip's words and rejoiced.*

⁴ The believers who had left Jerusalem went to different places, where they continued preaching the message about Jesus. ⁵ One of those believers whose name was Philip went down from Jerusalem to a city in Samaria province. There he was telling the people that Jesus is [MTY] the Messiah. ⁶ Many people there heard Philip speak and saw the miraculous things that he was doing. So they all <paid close attention to/listened carefully to> his words. ⁷ For example, when Philip commanded evil spirits who controlled many people that they should come out of them, they came out, while those spirits screamed. Also, many people who were paralyzed and many others who were lame were healed. ⁸ So many people [MTY] in that city greatly rejoiced.

Acts 8:9-13

THEME: *Philip baptized many Samaritans, including a sorcerer.*

⁹ There was a man in that city whose name was Simon. He had been practicing sorcery for a long time and he had been amazing the people in Samaria province by doing that. He continually claimed that he was a great/important person. ¹⁰ All the people there, both ordinary and important people, listened to him. Various ones of them were saying, "This man works in extremely powerful ways because God has caused him to be a great person." ¹¹ They continued to listen to him carefully, because for a long time he had astonished them by practicing sorcery. ¹² But then they believed Philip's message when he preached to them about how God desires to rule [MET] the lives of people who believe in him, and about Jesus being the Messiah [MTY]. Both the men and the women who believed in Jesus were baptized. {Philip was baptizing both the men and the women who had come to believe in Jesus}. ¹³ Simon himself believed Philip's message and, after he was baptized {after Philip baptized him}, he began to constantly accompany Philip. Simon was continually amazed because he often saw Philip doing many kinds of miraculous things.

Acts 8:14-17

THEME: *Samaritan believers received the power of the Holy Spirit.*

¹⁴ When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that many people [PRS] throughout Samaria district had believed the message from God about Jesus, they sent Peter and John there. ¹⁵ When Peter and John arrived in Samaria, they prayed for those new believers in order that the Holy Spirit's power would come to them. ¹⁶ Peter and John realized that the Holy Spirit had not yet begun to empower any of them. They had been baptized {Philip had baptized them} because they had believed in [MTY] the Lord Jesus, but they did not know about the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷ Then Peter and John placed their hands on the heads of each person, and they received the power of [MTY] the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:18-24

THEME: Peter denounced Simon the sorcerer.

¹⁸ Simon saw *things that convinced him* that God had given the Spirit's *power to people* as a result of the apostles placing their hands on them. So he offered to *give money* to the apostles, ¹⁹ saying, "Enable me also to do what *you are doing*, so that everyone on whom I place/put my hands may receive the Holy Spirit's *power*." ²⁰ But Peter said to him, "May you(*sg*) and your money go to hell, because you *mistakenly* think that you can buy *from us* what God *alone* gives to *people*!" ²¹ God has not authorized you to have any part of this ministry of giving *the Holy Spirit's power*, because he knows that you are not thinking rightly! (OR, because he knows that you are thinking completely wrongly.) ²² So stop thinking wickedly *like* that, and plead that the Lord, if he is willing, will forgive you *for what* you *wickedly* thought/planned to do! ²³ Turn away from your *evil ways*, because I perceive that you(*sg*) are extremely envious of *us*, and you *are* a slave of your *continual desire to do evil*! God will *certainly punish you severely*!" ²⁴ Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord God that *he* will not do to me what you just said!"

Acts 8:25

THEME: Peter and John preached to many Samaritans.

²⁵ After Peter and John told *people there* what they knew personally *about the Lord Jesus* and declared to them the message about Jesus, they both returned to Jerusalem. *Along the way* they preached the good message *about Jesus to people* in many villages in Samaria province.

Acts 8:26-28

THEME: Philip met an Ethiopian official.

²⁶ One day an angel whom the Lord God had sent commanded Philip, "Get ready and go south along the road that extends from Jerusalem to Gaza." *That* was a road in a desert area. ²⁷ So Philip got ready and went *along that road*. Suddenly he met a man from Ethiopia *country*. He was an important official who took care of all the funds for the queen of Ethiopia. *In his language people called their queen Candace*. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship God, ²⁸ and he was returning home and was seated *riding* in his chariot. *As he was riding*, he was reading *out loud from* what the prophet Isaiah had written [MTY] long ago.

Acts 8:29-31

THEME: The official could not understand what he was reading.

²⁹ God's Spirit told Philip, "Go near to that chariot and keep walking close to *the man who is riding in it!*" ³⁰ So Philip ran to *the chariot and kept running close to it*. Then he heard the official reading what the prophet Isaiah had written. He asked the man, "Do you(*sg*) understand what you are reading?" ³¹ He answered Philip, "No! <I cannot possibly *understand it* if there is no one to explain it to me!/How can I *understand it* if there is no one to explain it to me?> [RHQ]"

Acts 8:31b-35

THEME: Philip preached about Jesus to the official.

Then the man said to Philip, "Please come up *and sit beside me*." So Philip did that. ³² The part of the Scriptures that the official was reading was this:

He will be *silent* when they lead him away to kill him^a
like when people lead a sheep away to kill it.

As a young sheep is silent when its wool is being cut off {someone cuts off its wool}, *similarly* he will not protest [MTY] when people cause him to suffer.

³³ When he will be humiliated by being accused falsely {people will humiliate him by *accusing him falsely*},
the rulers <will not consider him innocent/will consider him guilty>.

No one will possibly be able to tell about his descendants, because he will be killed {people will kill him} *without him* having any descendants on the earth.

³⁴ The official asked Philip *concerning these words that he was reading*, "Tell me, who was the prophet writing about? Was *he writing* about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵ So Philip replied [MTY] to him and began to *explain* that Scripture passage. He told him the good message about [MTY] Jesus. So the official understood and believed in Jesus.

^a This translation uses the future tense because the original passage in Isaiah 53 used a prophetic perfect to make a prophecy about a certain future event.

Acts 8:36-39

THEME: *Philip baptized the official. Then the Spirit took Philip away.*

³⁶ While they were traveling along the road, they came to a *place where there was a pond of water near the road*. Then the official said to *Philip*, “Look, *there is a pond of water!* <I would like you to baptize me, because I do not know of anything that would prevent me from being baptized {prevent *you* from baptizing me.}/Do you know of anything that would prevent me from being baptized {prevent *you* from baptizing me}?> [RHQ]”^{b 38} So the official told *the driver* to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the official went down into the *pond of water*, and *Philip* baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, suddenly God’s Spirit took Philip away. The official never saw Philip again. But *although he never saw Philip again*, the official continued going along the road, very happy *that God had saved him*.

Acts 8:40

THEME: *Philip preached in towns from Azotus to Caesarea.*

⁴⁰ Philip then realized *that the Spirit had miraculously taken him to Azotus town*. While he traveled around *in that region*, he continued proclaiming the message *about Jesus* in all the towns *between Azotus and Caesarea*. *And he was still proclaiming* it when he finally arrived in Caesarea city.

Acts 9:1-2

THEME: *Saul asked the high priest to authorize him to arrest believers.*

9 ¹ Meanwhile, Saul angrily continued to say, “I will kill those who believe that *Jesus is the Lord!*” He went to the high priest *in Jerusalem* ² and requested him *to write letters introducing him to the leaders of [MTY] the Jewish meeting places in Damascus city*. *The letters asked them to authorize Saul to seize any men or women who followed the way that Jesus had taught*, and to take them as prisoners to Jerusalem so *that the Jewish leaders could judge and punish them*.

Acts 9:3-8

THEME: *While Saul was traveling to Damascus, Jesus appeared to him and blinded him.*

³ *Saul took those letters*, and while Saul and those with him were traveling, they were approaching Damascus. Suddenly a *brilliant light from heaven shone around Saul*. ⁴ *Immediately* he fell down to the ground. Then he heard the voice of *the Lord* say to him, “Saul, Saul, <stop causing me to suffer!/why are you causing me to suffer?> [RHQ]” ⁵ Saul asked him, “Lord, who are you?” He replied, “I am Jesus, and you(sg) are causing me to suffer *by hurting my followers!*” ⁶ Now instead of *continuing to do that*, stand up and go into the city! *Someone there will tell you(sg) what I want you to do.* ⁷ The men who were traveling with Saul *became so frightened that they could not say anything*. *They just stood there*. They only heard the sound *when the Lord spoke*, but they did not see anyone. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could not see anything. So the men *with him* took him by the hand and led him into Damascus. ⁹ For the next three days Saul could not see *anything*, and he did not eat or drink anything.

Acts 9:9-19

THEME: *Saul could see again after Ananias had put his hands on him.*

¹⁰ In Damascus there was a Jew named Ananias who believed in Jesus. While *Ananias was seeing* a vision, the Lord Jesus said to him, “Ananias!” He replied, “Lord, I *am listening.*” ¹¹ The Lord Jesus told him, “Go to Straight Street to the house that belongs to Judas. Ask *someone there if you(sg) can talk to a man named Saul from Tarsus city*, because, surprisingly, at this moment he is *praying to me*.” ¹² *Saul has seen* a vision in which a man named Ananias entered *the house where he was staying* and put his hands on him in order that he might see *again*.” ¹³ But Ananias *protested*, saying, “But Lord, many people have told me about this man! He has done many evil things to the people in Jerusalem who *believe in you!*” ¹⁴ And the chief priests have authorized him to come here *to Damascus* in order to seize all us who believe in you(sg) [MTY] *and take us to Jerusalem!*” ¹⁵ But the Lord Jesus told Ananias, “Go to *Saul!* Do what I say, because I have chosen him to serve me in order that he might speak about me [MTY] both to non-Jewish people and *their kings* and to the Israelite people. ¹⁶ I myself will tell him that he must often suffer greatly because of *telling people about me* [MTY].” ¹⁷ So Ananias went, and *after he found* the house *where Saul was*, he entered it. Then, *as soon as he met Saul*, he put his hands on him, and he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus *himself* commanded me to come *to you*. He is the *same* one who appeared to you(sg) while you were traveling along the road *to here*. *He sent me to you* in order that you might see again and that you might be completely controlled by the Holy Spirit {that the Holy Spirit might completely control you}.” ¹⁸ Instantly, things like *fish scales* fell from Saul’s eyes, and he was able to see again. Then he stood up and was baptized

^b Some Greek manuscripts add verse 37, “Philip said to him, ‘If you really believe in Jesus, I will baptize you.’ The official answered Philip, ‘I believe that Jesus is the Messiah and also that he is the Son of God.’”

{Ananias baptized him} *immediately*.¹⁹ After Saul ate some food, he became strong again. Saul stayed with the *other* believers in Damascus for several days.

Acts 9:20-22

THEME: *People there were astonished that Saul had believed in Jesus.*

²⁰ Right away he began to preach *to people about Jesus* in the Jewish meeting places *there*. *He told them* that Jesus is <the Son of/the man who is also> God.²¹ And all the people who heard him *preach* were amazed. *Various ones of them* were saying, “<*We(inc) can hardly believe that this is the same man* who persecuted the believers in Jerusalem!/Is this really the *same man* who persecuted the believers in Jerusalem?> [RHQ, MTY] And *we(inc)* know that he has [RHQ] come here to tie our hands and take us to the chief priests *in Jerusalem!*”²² But *God* enabled Saul *to preach to many people* even more convincingly. He was proving *from the Scriptures* that Jesus is the Messiah. So the Jewish *leaders* in Damascus could not think of anything <to refute *what he said/to prove that what he said was not true*>.

Acts 9:23-25

THEME: *Saul escaped from those who plotted to kill him.*

²³ Some time later, *after Saul had left Damascus and then returned*, the Jewish *leaders* [SYN] *there* plotted to kill him.²⁴ *During each day and night* those Jews were continually watching *the people passing through* the city gates, in order that *when they saw Saul* they might kill him. However, *someone* told Saul what they planned *to do*.²⁵ So some of those whom he had helped *to believe in Jesus* took him *one night to the high stone wall that surrounded the city*. They *used ropes* to lower him in a *large* basket through an opening in the wall. *So he escaped from Damascus*.

Acts 9:26-28

THEME: *Barnabas introduced Saul to other believers in Jerusalem.*

²⁶ When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he began trying to associate with other believers. However, *almost* all of them continued to be afraid of him, because they did not believe that he had become a believer.²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He explained to the apostles how, *while Saul was traveling* along the road *to Damascus*, he had seen the Lord *Jesus* and how the Lord had spoken to him *there*. *He also told them* how Saul had preached boldly about Jesus [MTY] *to people* in Damascus. *The apostles believed Barnabas and told the other believers about that*.²⁸ So Saul began to associate with the apostles *and other believers* throughout Jerusalem, and he spoke boldly *to people* about [MTY] the Lord *Jesus*.

Acts 9:29-30

THEME: *The believers sent Saul to Tarsus because some Jews tried to kill him.*

²⁹ Saul was *also* speaking *about Jesus* with Jews who spoke Greek, and he was debating with them. But they were continually trying *to think* <of a way to kill him/of how they could kill him>.³⁰ When the *other* believers heard that *they were planning to kill him*, *some of the* believers took Saul down to Caesarea city. *There* they arranged for him to go *by ship* to Tarsus, *his hometown*.

Acts 9:31

THEME: *The church in Israel had peace and many people believed.*

³¹ So the groups of believers throughout *the entire regions* of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria lived peacefully *because no one was persecuting them any more*. The Holy Spirit was strengthening them *spiritually* and encouraging them. They were continuing to reverence/honor the Lord *Jesus*, *and the Holy Spirit* was enabling many other people *to become believers*.

Acts 9:32-35

THEME: *Because Peter healed Aeneas, many people believed in Jesus.*

³² While Peter was traveling throughout those *regions*, *once* he went to *the coastal plain* to visit the believers *who lived* in Lydda town.³³ There he met a man whose name was Aeneas. Aeneas had not been able to get up from *his* bed for eight years, because he was paralyzed.³⁴ Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you(*sg*) *right now!* Get up and roll up your mat!” Right away Aeneas stood up.³⁵ Most of the people who lived in Lydda and on Sharon *plain* saw Aeneas *after the Lord had healed him*, so they believed in the Lord *Jesus*.

Acts 9:36-37

THEME: Dorcas died.

³⁶In Joppa town there was a believer whose name was Tabitha. Her name in the Greek language was Dorcas. Both of these names mean gazelle/deer/antelope. That woman was continually doing good deeds for others. Specifically, she was helping poor people by giving them things that they needed. ³⁷During the time that Peter was in Lydda, she became sick and died. Some women there washed her body according to the Jewish custom so that the people could bury it. Then they covered her body with cloth and placed it in an upstairs room in her house.

Acts 9:38-43

THEME: Peter resurrected Dorcas.

³⁸Lydda was near Joppa, so when the disciples heard that Peter was still in Lydda, they sent two men to go to Peter. When they arrived where Peter was, they repeatedly urged/begged him, "Please come immediately with us to Joppa!" ³⁹So right away Peter got ready and went with them. When they arrived at the house in Joppa, they took him to the upstairs room where Dorcas' body was lying. All the widows there stood around him. They were crying and showing him the cloaks and other garments that Dorcas had made for people while she was still alive. ⁴⁰But Peter sent them all out of the room. Then he got down on his knees and prayed. Then, turning toward her body, he said, "Tabitha, stand up!" Immediately she opened her eyes and, when she saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹He grasped one of her hands and helped her to stand up. After he had summoned the believers and especially the widows among them to come back in, he showed them that she was alive again. ⁴²Soon people everywhere in Joppa knew about that miracle, and as a result many people believed in the Lord Jesus. ⁴³Peter stayed in Joppa many days with a man named Simon who made leather from animal skins.

Acts 10:1-8

THEME: Obeying an angel, Cornelius sent men to summon Peter.

10 ¹There was a man who lived in Caesarea city whose name was Cornelius. He was an officer who commanded 100 men in a large group of Roman soldiers from Italy. ²He always tried to do what would please God; he and his entire household [MTY] were non-Jews who habitually worshipped God. He sometimes gave money to help poor Jewish people, and he prayed to God regularly.

³One day at about three o'clock in the afternoon Cornelius saw a vision. He clearly saw an angel whom God had sent. The angel came into his room and said to him, "Cornelius!" ⁴Cornelius stared at the angel and became terrified. Then he asked fearfully, "Sir, what do you(sg) want?" The angel answered him, "You(sg) have pleased God because you have been praying regularly to him and you often give money to help poor people. Those things have been like a sacrifice to God." ⁵So now command some men to go to Joppa city and tell them to bring back a man named Simon whose other name is Peter. ⁶He is staying with a man, also named Simon, who makes leather. His house is near the ocean." ⁷When the angel who spoke to Cornelius had gone, he summoned two of his household servants and a soldier who served him, one who also worshipped God. ⁸He explained to them everything that the angel had said. Then he told them to go to Joppa to ask Peter to come to Caesarea.

Acts 10:9-16

THEME: Peter's vision.

⁹About noon the next day those three men were traveling along the road and were coming near Joppa. As they were approaching Joppa, Peter went up on the flat house-top to pray. ¹⁰He became hungry and wanted something to eat. While someone was preparing the food, Peter saw this vision: ¹¹«He saw heaven open/He saw an opening in the sky» and something like a large sheet was being lowered to the ground. It was tied at its four corners with ropes. ¹²Inside the sheet were all kinds of creatures. These included animals and birds that the Mosaic laws forbade Jews to eat. Some had four feet, others crawled on the ground, and others were wild birds. ¹³Then he heard God [SYN] say to him, "Peter, stand up, kill and cook some of these and eat their meat!" ¹⁴But Peter replied, "Lord, surely you(sg) do not really want me to do that! I have never eaten any meat that our Jewish law says is unacceptable to God or something that we(exc) must not eat!" ¹⁵Then Peter heard [MTY] God talk to him a second time. He said, "I am God, so if I have made something acceptable to eat, do not say that it is not acceptable to eat!" ¹⁶This happened three times, so he knew that he had to think carefully about what it might mean. Immediately after God had said that the third time, «the sheet with the animals and birds was the pulled back into heaven/someone pulled the sheet with the animals and birds up into the sky again».

Acts 10:17-23a

THEME: The Holy Spirit commanded Peter to go with the non-Jewish men.

¹⁷While Peter was trying to understand what that vision meant, the men who had been sent by Cornelius {whom Cornelius had sent} arrived. They asked people how to get to Simon's house. So they found his house and were standing outside the gate. ¹⁸They called and were asking if a man named Simon, whose other name was Peter, was staying there. ¹⁹While

Peter was still trying to understand *what* the vision *meant*, God's Spirit said to him, "Listen! Three men *are here who want to see you*.²⁰ So get up and go downstairs and go with them! Do not think that you(sg) should not go with them *because of their being non-Jews*, because I have sent them *here!*"²¹ So Peter went down to the men and said to them, "*Greetings! I am the man you are looking for. Why have you come?*"²² One of them replied, "Cornelius, who is a *Roman* army officer, *sent us here*. He is a righteous man who worships God, and all of the Jewish people [HYP] *who know about him* say that he is a very good man. An angel *<who was sent from God/whom God sent>* said to him, 'Tell some men to *go to Joppa to see Simon Peter and bring him here*, so that you(sg) can hear what he has to say.'²³ So Peter *said that he would go with them, and then he invited them into the house and told them that they could stay there that night.*

Acts 10:23b-26

THEME: *Peter went with the men and met Cornelius.*

The next day Peter got ready and went with the men. Several of the believers from Joppa went with him.²⁴ The day after that, they arrived in Caesarea *city*. Cornelius was waiting for them. He had also invited his relatives and close friends to *come, so they were there in his house too*.²⁵ When Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and bowed low in front of him to worship him.²⁶ But Peter *grasped Cornelius by the hand and lifted him to his feet*. He said, "Stand up! *Do not reverence/worship me! I myself am only human, like you!*"

Acts 10:27-29

THEME: *Peter asked why they had sent for him.*

²⁷ While he was talking to Cornelius, Peter *and the others* entered a *large room inside the house*. Peter saw that many people had gathered together *there*.²⁸ Then Peter said to them, "You all know that any *of us Jews* would be disobeying *our Jewish laws* if we(exc) associated with a non-Jewish person or *if we even visited him*. However, God has shown me *in a vision* that I should not say about anyone that God will not accept him.²⁹ So when you sent *some men* to ask me to come *here*, I came *right away*. I did not say that I could not go *with non-Jewish people*. So, *please tell me*, why have you asked me to come *here?*"

Acts 10:30-33

THEME: *Cornelius told about his vision.*

³⁰ Cornelius replied, "About this time four days ago I was praying *to God* in my house, *as I regularly do* at three o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly a man whose clothes *shone brightly* stood in front of me,³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, when you(sg) have prayed, you have been heard by God {God has heard *when you(sg) have prayed to him*}. He has also noticed that you have *often given money to help poor people, and he is pleased with that*.³² So now, send *messengers to go to Joppa city, in order to ask Simon whose other name is Peter to come here*. He is staying near the ocean in a house that belongs to *another man named Simon, who makes leather. When Simon Peter comes, he will tell you a message from God.*'³³ So I immediately sent *some men who asked you(sg) to come here*, and I *certainly* thank you for coming. Now we(exc) all are gathered *here, knowing that God is with us, in order to hear all the things that the Lord God has commanded you to say. So please speak to us.*"

Acts 10:34-38

THEME: *Peter reminded them of what they knew about Jesus.*

³⁴ So Peter began to speak [MTY] to them. He said, "*Now I understand that it is true that God does not favor only certain groups of people*.³⁵ Instead, from **every** group of people he accepts *everyone who honors him and who does what pleases him*.³⁶ You know the message that God sent to *us Israelites. He proclaimed to us the good news that he would cause people to have peace with him* because of what Jesus Christ *has done*. This *Jesus is not Lord only over us Israelites. He is also the Lord who rules over all people*.³⁷ You know what *he* did throughout the land of Judea, beginning in Galilee. He began *to do those things* after John had been proclaiming *to people that they should turn away from their sinful behavior before he baptized them*.³⁸ You know that God gave [MTY] his Holy Spirit to Jesus, *the man from Nazareth town*, and gave him the power *to do miracles*. You also know how Jesus went to many places, always doing good deeds and healing *people. Specifically, he was continually healing all the people whom the devil was causing to suffer. Jesus was able to do those things* because God was always helping him.

Acts 10:39-43

THEME: *Peter said that God would forgive the sins of all who believe in Jesus.*

³⁹ "We *apostles* tell people about all the things that we saw *Jesus* do in Jerusalem and in the *rest of Israel. The leaders in Jerusalem had him killed by being nailed to a cross*.⁴⁰ However, God caused him to become alive again on the third day *after he had died*. God also enabled *some of us(exc)* to see him *so that we would know that he was alive again*.⁴¹ God did not let all the *Jewish people* see him. Instead, he had chosen *us apostles* beforehand to see *Jesus after he became alive again* and to tell others *about him*. We *apostles are the people who ate meals with him <after he had become alive*

again/after he had risen from the dead>. ⁴² God commanded us to preach to the people and tell them that Jesus is the one whom he has appointed to *some day judge everyone. He will judge all those who will still be living and all those who will have died by that time.* ⁴³ All of the prophets *who wrote about the Messiah long ago* told people about him. *They wrote that if people believe in the Messiah [MTY], God would forgive them for their sins, because of what the Messiah would do for them.*"

Acts 10:44-48

THEME: *The Holy Spirit came down on the non-Jewish believers.*

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking those words, suddenly the Holy Spirit <came down on/began to control> all those non-Jewish people who were listening to the message. ⁴⁵ The Jewish believers who had come with Peter from Joppa were amazed that God had generously given the Holy Spirit to the non-Jewish people, too. ⁴⁶ *The Jewish believers knew that God had done that* because they were hearing those people speaking languages [MTY] *that they had not learned* and telling how great God is. ⁴⁷ Then Peter said to the other Jewish believers who were there, "God has given them the Holy Spirit just like *he gave him* to us Jewish believers, so <surely all of you would agree that we(exc) should baptize these people!/would any of you forbid that these people should be baptized?> [RHQ]" ⁴⁸ Then Peter told those non-Jewish people that they should be baptized to show that they had believed [MTY] in the Lord Jesus Christ. *So they baptized all of them. After they were baptized, they requested that Peter stay with them several days. So Peter and the other Jewish believers did that.*

Acts 11:1-3

THEME: *Some Jewish believers criticized Peter.*

11 ¹ The apostles and other believers who lived in various towns in Judea province heard people say that some non-Jewish people had believed the message from God about Jesus. ² So when Peter and the six other believers returned from Caesarea to Jerusalem, some Jewish believers criticized Peter, because they thought that Jews should not associate with non-Jews [MTY]. ³ They said to him, "Not only was it wrong for you(sg) to visit non-Jewish people, you even ate with them!"

Acts 11:4-10

THEME: *Peter told about his vision.*

⁴ So Peter began to explain exactly what had happened concerning Cornelius. ⁵ He said, "I was praying by myself in Joppa town and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw that something like a large sheet was being lowered from heaven. It was tied with ropes at its four corners, and it came down to where I was. ⁶ As I was looking intently into it, I saw some tame animals but also animals that our laws forbid us to eat, including wild animals, snakes, and wild birds. ⁷ Then I heard God [MTY] commanding me, 'Peter, rise up, kill some of these, and cook and eat their meat!' ⁸ But I replied, 'Lord, you(sg) surely do not really want me to do that, because I have never eaten [MTY] meat from any animal that our laws say that we(exc) must not eat [SYN]!' ⁹ God spoke from heaven to me a second time, 'I am God, so if I have made something acceptable to eat, do not say that it is not acceptable to eat!' ¹⁰ Then after that happened three times, the sheet with all those animals and birds was pulled up into heaven again.

Acts 11:11-17

THEME: *Peter said that the Holy Spirit came to be with the non-Jewish believers. Peter accepted those non-Jews as fellow believers.*

¹¹ "At that exact moment, three men who had been {whom Cornelius had} sent from Caesarea arrived at the house where I was staying. ¹² God's Spirit told me that I should be willing to go with them even though they were not Jews. These six Jewish believers from Joppa went with me to Caesarea, and then we(exc) went into that non-Jewish man's house. ¹³ He told us that he had seen an angel standing in his house. The angel told him, 'Tell some men to go to Joppa and bring back Simon whose other name is Peter. ¹⁴ He will tell you(sg) how you and everyone [MTY] else in your house will be saved {how God will save you and everyone [MTY] else in your house}.' ¹⁵ After I started to speak, the Holy Spirit suddenly came down on them, just like he had first [MTY] come on us during the Pentecost festival. ¹⁶ Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John caused people to be baptized in water, but God will cause the Holy Spirit to enter you and change your lives.' ¹⁷ God gave those non-Jews the same Holy Spirit that he had given to us(inc) after we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, <I could not possibly tell God that he did wrong when he gave them the Holy Spirit!/how could I tell God that he did wrong when he gave them the Holy Spirit?> [RHQ] He was showing that he had received them!"

Acts 11:18

THEME: *They praised God that he also saves non-Jewish people.*

¹⁸ After those Jewish believers heard what Peter said, they stopped criticizing *him*. Instead, they praised God, saying, "Then it is *clear to us that* God has also accepted the non-Jews so that they will have eternal life, if they turn from their sinful behavior *and believe in Jesus*."

Acts 11:19-21

THEME: *Many non-Jews in Antioch believed in the Lord Jesus.*

¹⁹ After *people had killed* Stephen, many of the believers left *Jerusalem and went* to other places because people were causing them to suffer *there in Jerusalem*. Some of them went to *Phoenicia region*, some went to *Cyprus Island*, and others went to *Antioch city in Syria province*. In those places they were continually telling people the message *about Jesus*, but they told only other Jewish people. ²⁰ Some of the believers were men from *Cyprus Island* and *Cyrene city in north Africa*. They went to *Antioch city*, and *although they told other Jews about* the Lord Jesus, they also told non-Jewish people *there*. ²¹ The Lord God [MTY] was powerfully enabling those *believers to preach effectively*. As a result, very many *non-Jewish people believed their message and trusted in the Lord Jesus*.

Acts 11:22-24

THEME: *Barnabas encouraged the believers at Antioch.*

²² The group of believers in Jerusalem heard [MTY] *people say that many people in Antioch were believing in Jesus*. So the *leaders* of the congregation in *Jerusalem* asked Barnabas to go to Antioch. ²³ When he got *there*, he realized that God had acted kindly toward *the believers*. So he was very happy, and he continually encouraged all of the *believers* to continue to trust completely in the Lord Jesus. ²⁴ Barnabas was a good man *whom* the Holy Spirit completely controlled, one who trusted God completely. *Because of what Barnabas did*, many people *there* believed in the Lord Jesus.

Acts 11:25-26

THEME: *Barnabas and Saul taught many believers at Antioch.*

²⁵ Then Barnabas went to *Tarsus city in Cilicia province to try to find Saul*. ²⁶ After he found him, Barnabas brought him *back to Antioch to help teach the believers*. So during a whole year *Barnabas and Saul met regularly* with the congregation *there* and taught many of them *about Jesus*. It was at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians (*that people* first called the believers Christians).

Acts 11:27-30

THEME: *Believers in Antioch helped needy believers in Judea.*

²⁷ During the time *that Barnabas and Saul were at Antioch*, some *believers who were prophets* arrived there from Jerusalem. ²⁸ One of them, whose name was Agabus, stood up *in order to speak*. God's Spirit enabled him to prophesy <that there would soon be a famine in many countries/that *people* in many countries [HYP] would soon *suffer because they would not have enough food to eat*>. (That famine happened when Claudius was the *Roman Emperor*.) ²⁹ When the believers *there heard what Agabus said*, they decided that they would send *money* to help the believers who lived in *Judea province*. Each of them *decided to give as much money as he was able to give*. ³⁰ They sent *the money* with Barnabas and Saul to the leaders of the congregation *in Jerusalem*.

Acts 12:1-4

THEME: *Herod had James killed and Peter put in prison.*

12 ¹ It was about this time that King Herod Agrippa *sent soldiers* [MTY] who seized *and put in prison* some of the *leaders* of the congregation *in Jerusalem*. He *did that* because he wanted to make the believers suffer. ² He commanded a *soldier* to cut off the head of *the apostle James*, the *older brother of the apostle John*. ³ When Herod realized that he had pleased the *leaders of the Jewish people by doing that*, he commanded *soldiers* to arrest Peter *in order to kill him*, too. This happened during the festival *when the Jewish people ate bread that did not have yeast*. ⁴ After *they seized Peter*, they put him in prison. They arranged for four groups of soldiers to guard Peter. Each *group* had four soldiers. *Every three hours a different group began to guard him while the others rested*. Herod wanted to bring Peter out of *prison and judge him* in front of the *Jewish people* after the *Passover Festival was finished*. He *then planned to command soldiers to execute Peter*.

Acts 12:5-11

THEME: *An angel freed Peter from prison.*

⁵ So for several days Peter was kept {they kept Peter} in prison. But the *other believers* in the congregation at *Jerusalem* were praying earnestly to God *that he would help Peter*. ⁶ The night *before* Herod planned to bring Peter out *from prison to have him executed* publicly, Peter was sleeping *in the prison* between two soldiers, with two chains binding his arms *to the arms of the soldiers*. Two other soldiers were guarding the prison doors. ⁷ Suddenly an angel *from the Lord God* stood *beside Peter*, and a *bright* light shone in his cell. The angel poked Peter in the side and woke him up and said, “Get up quickly!” *While Peter was getting up*, the chains fell off from his wrists. *However, the soldiers were not aware of what was happening*. ⁸ Then the angel said to him, “Put on your clothes and sandals!” So Peter did. Then the angel said to him, “Fasten your belt/girdle *around you(sg)* and put on your sandals!” So Peter did that. Then the angel told him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me!” ⁹ So, *after Peter put on his cloak and sandals*, he followed *the angel out of the prison cell*, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening. He thought *that he was seeing a vision*. ¹⁰ Peter and the angel walked by the soldiers who were guarding the two doors, *but the soldiers did not see them*. Then they came to the iron gate that *led out into the city*. The gate opened by itself, and Peter and the angel walked *out of the prison*. After they had walked *a ways* along one street, the angel suddenly disappeared. ¹¹ Then Peter *finally* realized that *what had happened to him was not a vision, but* it had really happened. So he said *to himself*, “Now I really know that the Lord God sent an angel *to help me*. He rescued me from what Herod planned to do [MTY] *to me* and *also* from all the things that the Jewish leaders [SYN] expected *that Herod would do to me*.”

Acts 12:12-17

THEME: *Peter reported to the other believers.*

¹² When Peter realized *that God had rescued him*, he went to Mary’s house. She was the mother of John whose other name was Mark. Many *believers* had assembled there, and they were praying *that God would help Peter somehow*. ¹³ When Peter knocked at the outer entrance, a servant girl named Rhoda came to find out *who was outside the door*. ¹⁴ *When Peter answered her*, she recognized his voice, but she was so happy *and excited* that she did not open the door! Instead, she ran *back into the house*. She *excitedly* announced *to the other believers* that Peter was standing outside the door. ¹⁵ But *one of* them said to her, “You(sg) are crazy!” But she continued saying that it was *really true*. Then they repeatedly said, “No, it cannot be Peter. It is *probably* the angel *who was guarding him who has come* (OR, It is the angel *who has guarded/protected him, and he has come to tell us that Peter has died*.)” ¹⁶ But Peter continued knocking *on the door*. So *when someone finally* opened the door, they saw that it was Peter, and they were completely amazed! ¹⁷ Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet. Then he told them exactly how the Lord God had led him out of the prison. He also said, “Tell James, the *leader* of our congregation, and our *other* fellow believers *what has happened*.” Then Peter left and went away to another town.

Acts 12:18-19

THEME: *Herod commanded soldiers to execute the guards.*

¹⁸ The next morning the soldiers *who had been guarding Peter* became terribly distressed, *because they did not know* what had happened to him. ¹⁹ Then Herod *heard about it*. So he *commanded soldiers* to search for Peter, but they did not find him. Then he questioned the soldiers *who had been guarding Peter*, and asked them, “How did Peter get away when you were there guarding him?” *But they could not explain it*. So he commanded them to be led away *to be executed* {other soldiers to lead them away to execute them}. Afterwards, Herod went from Judea *province* down to Caesarea city, where he stayed *for some time*.

Acts 12:20-23

THEME: *An angel caused Herod to die.*

²⁰ King Herod had been furiously angry with the people *who lived* in Tyre and Sidon cities. Then *one day* some men *who represented them* came unitedly to Caesarea in order to meet with Herod. They persuaded Blastus, who was one of Herod’s important officials, to tell Herod that the people *in their cities* wanted to make peace *with him*. They wanted to be able to trade with the people *that Herod ruled*, because they needed to buy food from those regions. Herod had commanded the people *in the areas he ruled* to stop selling food to the people *in those cities*. ²¹ On the day that Herod had planned to meet with them, he put on *very expensive clothes that showed that he was king/his royal robes*. Then he sat on his *throne/chair from which he ruled people*, and *formally* addressed *all* the people *who had gathered there*. ²² Those who were listening to him shouted repeatedly, “This man who is speaking is a god, not a man!” ²³ So, because Herod *let the people praise him* instead of praising God, immediately an angel *from the Lord God* caused Herod to become seriously ill. Many worms ate his intestines, and soon he died *very painfully*.

Acts 12:24-25

THEME: *Many people heard God's message and became believers. Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch from Jerusalem.*

²⁴ *The believers* continued telling God's message to people in many places, and *the number of people who believed in Jesus* was continually increasing/there were continually more and more people who were believing in Jesus.

²⁵ When Barnabas and Saul finished *delivering the money to help the Jewish believers in Judea*, they left Jerusalem and returned to *Antioch city, in Syria province*. They took John, whose other name was Mark, with them.

Acts 13:1-3

THEME: *The Holy Spirit commanded Barnabas and Saul to go on a mission.*

13 ¹ Among *the people* in the congregation at Antioch in Syria province there were *prophets/those who spoke messages from God* and those who taught *people about Jesus*. They were Barnabas; Simeon, who was also called Niger/Blackman; Lucius, from Cyrene city; Manaen, who had grown up with King Herod Antipas; and Saul. ² While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said to them, "Appoint Barnabas and Saul to serve me and to go and do the work that I have chosen them to do!" ³ So they continued *to fast/to abstain from eating food* and pray. Then having put their hands on Barnabas and Saul and *praying that God would help them*, they sent them off to do what the Holy Spirit had commanded.

Acts 13:4-5

THEME: *Barnabas and Saul preached the gospel in synagogues on Cyprus.*

⁴ Barnabas and Saul, guided by the Holy Spirit, went down from Antioch to Seleucia port. From there they went by ship to Salamis port on Cyprus Island. ⁵ While they were in Salamis, they went to the Jewish meeting places. There they proclaimed the message from God about Jesus. John Mark went with them and was helping them.

Acts 13:6-12

THEME: *Saul-Paul denounced a sorcerer, and an official believed in Jesus.*

⁶ The three of them went across the entire island to Paphos city. There they met a magician whose name was Bar-Jesus. He was a Jew who falsely claimed *to be a prophet/to speak messages from God*. ⁷ He often accompanied the governor of the island, Sergius Paulus, who was an intelligent man. The governor sent someone to ask Barnabas and Saul to come to him, because he wanted to hear the word of God. So Barnabas and Saul came and told him about Jesus. ⁸ However, the magician, whose name was Elymas in the Greek language, was opposing them. He repeatedly tried to persuade the governor not to believe in Jesus. ⁹ Then Saul, who now called himself Paul, empowered by the Holy Spirit, looked intently at the magician and said, ¹⁰ "You(sg) are serving the devil and you oppose everything that is good! You are always lying to people and doing other evil things to them. *You must stop saying that the truth about the Lord God is a pack of lies/When will you stop changing what is true about the Lord God and saying what is not true about him?*" [RHQ] ¹¹ Right now the Lord God [MTY] is going to punish you! You will become blind and not even be able to see the sun for some time." At once he became blind, as though he was in a dark mist, and he groped about, searching for someone to hold him by the hand and lead him. ¹² When the governor saw what had happened to Elymas, he believed in the Lord Jesus. He was amazed by what Paul and Barnabas were teaching about the Lord Jesus.

Acts 13:13-15

THEME: *The leaders of the Jewish meeting place in Antioch asked Paul and Barnabas to speak to them.*

¹³ After that, Paul and the two men with him went by ship from Paphos to Perga port in Pamphylia province. At Perga John Mark left them and returned to his home in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ Then Paul and Barnabas traveled by land from Perga and arrived in Antioch city near Pisidia district in Galatia province. *On the Sabbath/On the Jewish rest day* they entered *the synagogue/the Jewish meeting place* and sat down. ¹⁵ Someone read aloud from what Moses had written. Then someone read from what the other prophets had written. [MTY] Then the leaders of the Jewish meeting place gave someone this note to take to Paul and Barnabas: "Fellow-Jews, if one of you wants to speak to the people here to encourage them, please speak to us(exc) now."

Acts 13:16-20

THEME: *Paul said that God helped Israel and gave them the land of Canaan.*

¹⁶ So Paul stood up and motioned with his right hand so that the people would listen to him. Then he said, "Fellow-Israelites and you non-Jewish people who also worship God, please listen to me! ¹⁷ God, whom we(inc) Israelites worship, chose our ancestors to be his people, and he caused them to become very numerous while they were foreigners living in Egypt. Then after many years, God helped them [MTY] powerfully and led them out of there. ¹⁸ Even though they repeatedly disobeyed

him, he cared for them for about forty years *while they were* in the desert. ¹⁹ He *enabled the Israelites* to conquer seven tribal groups *who were then living* in Canaan region, and he gave their land to us Israelites for us to possess. ²⁰ *Our ancestors began to possess Canaan about 450 years after their ancestors had arrived in Egypt.*

Acts 13:20b-22

THEME: *Paul told about God's removing Saul and appointing David to be Israel's king.*

"After that, God appointed leaders *to rule the Israelite people. Those leaders continued to rule our people* until the time when the prophet Samuel *ruled them.* ²¹ Then, *while Samuel was still their leader,* the people demanded that he *appoint a king to rule them.* So God appointed Saul, the son of Kish, from the tribe of Benjamin, *to be their king.* He *ruled them* for forty years. ²² After God had rejected Saul *from being king,* he appointed David to be their king. God said about him, 'I have observed that David, son of Jesse, is exactly the kind of man that I desire [IDM]. He will do *everything that I want him to do.*'

Acts 13:23-25

THEME: *Paul said that God sent David's descendant, Jesus, to Israel to save them.*

²³ "From *among David's descendants,* God brought one of them, Jesus, to us Israelite people to save us, just like he had told *David and our other ancestors* that he would do. ²⁴ Before Jesus began his work, John *the Baptizer* preached to all of our Israelite people *who came to him. He told them* that they should turn away from their sinful behavior *and ask God to forgive them. Then he would baptize them.* ²⁵ When John was about to finish the work *that God gave him to do,* he frequently said to *the people,* 'Do you think [RHQ] that I am *the Messiah whom God promised to send?* No, I am not. But listen! The Messiah will soon come. *He is so much greater than I am that I am not even important enough to be his slave* [MET].'

Acts 13:26-31

THEME: *Paul said that God resurrected Jesus and caused many people to see him.*

²⁶ "Fellow-Israelis, you who are descendants of Abraham, and *you non-Jewish people who also worship God, please listen!* *It is to all of us that God has sent the message about how he saves people.* ²⁷ The people who were living in Jerusalem and their rulers did not realize that this man *Jesus was the one whom God had sent to save them.* Although messages from [MTY] the prophets have been read *aloud* {someone has read *aloud* messages from [MTY] the prophets} every <Sabbath/Jewish day of rest>, they did not understand *what the prophets wrote about the Messiah.* So the *Jewish leaders* condemned Jesus *to die,* which was just like the prophets predicted. ²⁸ *Many people accused Jesus of doing wicked things,* but they could not prove that he had done anything for which he deserved to die. They insistently asked Pilate *the governor* to command that Jesus be executed {to command soldiers to execute Jesus}. *So Pilate did what they asked him to do.* ²⁹ They did *to Jesus* all the things that *the prophets long ago had written that people would do to him. They killed Jesus by nailing him to a cross. Then his body was taken* {some people took his body} down from the cross and placed it in a tomb. ³⁰ However, God <raised him from the dead/caused him to live again after he had died> ³¹ and for many days he *repeatedly* appeared to *his followers* who had come along with him from Galilee *province* to Jerusalem. Those *who saw him* are telling the *Jewish people* about him now.

Acts 13:32-37

THEME: *Paul said that God had done what he had promised that he would do by resurrecting Jesus.*

³² "Right now we *two* are proclaiming to you this good message. We want to tell you that God has fulfilled what he promised to *our Jewish ancestors!* ³³ He has now done that for us *(inc) who are their descendants, and also for you who are not Jews,* by causing Jesus to live again. That is just like what *David* wrote in the second Psalm that *God said when he was sending his Son,*

You *(sg)* are my Son;

Today I have shown everyone *that I really am* your Father.

³⁴ *God has* <raised the Messiah from the dead/caused the Messiah to live again after he had died> and will never let him die again. *Concerning that, God said to our Jewish ancestors,* 'I will surely help you, as I *promised David that I would do.*'

³⁵ So *in writing another Psalm, David said this to God about the Messiah:* 'Because I am devoted to you and always obey you, *when I die* you *(sg)* will not let my body decay.' ³⁶ While David was living, he did what God wanted him to do. And when he died [EUP], his *body* was buried, as his ancestors' *bodies had been buried,* and his body decayed. So *he could not have been speaking about himself in this Psalm.* ³⁷ *Instead, he was speaking about Jesus. Jesus also died, but God* <raised him from the dead/caused him to live again>, and *therefore* his body did not decay.

Acts 13:38-41

THEME: *Paul informed them that God would forgive their sins if they believed in Jesus.*

³⁸⁻³⁹ “Therefore, my fellow-Israelis and other friends, it is important for you to know that we(exc) are declaring to you that God can forgive you for your sins as a result of what Jesus has done. Because of what Jesus has done, God considers that everyone who believes in Jesus is no longer guilty (OR, the record has been erased {God has erased the record}) concerning everything that they have done that displeased God. But when God does that for you, it is not as a result of your obeying the laws that Moses wrote. ⁴⁰ Therefore be careful that God does not judge you [MTY], as one of the prophets said [MTY] that God would do! ⁴¹ The prophet wrote that God said:

You who ridicule me, you will certainly be astonished when you see what I am doing, and then you will be destroyed.

You will be astonished because I will do something terrible to you while you are living. You would not believe that I would do that even though someone told you!”

Acts 13:42-43

THEME: *People asked Paul and Barnabas to speak to them again the next Jewish day of rest.*

⁴² After Paul finished speaking, while he and Barnabas were leaving the Jewish meeting place, many of the people there repeatedly requested that on the next <Sabbath/Jewish day of rest> the two of them should speak to them again about those things that Paul had just told them. ⁴³ After they began to leave the meeting, many of them went along with Paul and Barnabas. They consisted of Jews and also of non-Jews who had accepted the things that the Jews believe. Paul and Barnabas continued talking to them, and were urging them to continue believing the message that God kindly forgives people’s sins because of what Jesus did.

Acts 13:44-49

THEME: *Many non-Jews believed in Jesus and told others about him.*

⁴⁴ On the next Jewish rest day, most of the people in Antioch came to the Jewish meeting place to hear Paul and Barnabas speak about the Lord Jesus. ⁴⁵ But the leaders of [SYN] the Jews became extremely jealous, because they saw that large crowds of non-Jewish people were coming to hear Paul and Barnabas. So they began to contradict the things that Paul was saying and also to insult him. ⁴⁶ Then, speaking very boldly, Paul and Barnabas said to those Jewish leaders, “We two had to speak the message from God about Jesus to you Jews first before we proclaim it to non-Jews, because God commanded us to do that. But you are rejecting God’s message. By doing that, you have shown that you are not worthy <to have eternal life/to live eternally with God>. Therefore, we are leaving you, and now we will go to the non-Jewish people to tell them the message from God. ⁴⁷ We are doing that also because the Lord God has commanded us to do it. He said to us,

I have appointed you to reveal things about me to non-Jewish people [MET] that will be like a light to them. I have appointed you to tell people everywhere [MTY] in the world about the one who came to save them.

⁴⁸ While the non-Jewish people were listening to those words, they began to rejoice, and they repeatedly said that the message about the Lord Jesus was wonderful. And all of the non-Jewish people whom God had chosen <to have eternal life/to live eternally with God> believed the message about the Lord Jesus. ⁴⁹ At that time, many of the believers traveled around throughout that region. As they did that, they were proclaiming the message about the Lord Jesus [MTY].

Acts 13:50-52

THEME: *People expelled the apostles, but the believers continued on.*

⁵⁰ However, some leaders of [SYN] the Jews incited the most important men in the city and some important/influential women who had accepted what the Jews believe to oppose Paul and Barnabas. So those non-Jewish people incited other people also to persecute Paul and Barnabas. As a result they expelled the two men from their region. ⁵¹ So, as the two apostles were leaving, they shook the dust from their feet to show those Jewish leaders that God had rejected them and would punish them. They left Antioch city and went to Iconium city. ⁵² Meanwhile the believers in Antioch continued to rejoice greatly, and they continued to be completely controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Acts 14:1-3

THEME: *Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel and performed miracles in Iconium.*

14 ¹ At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish meeting place and spoke very convincingly about the Lord Jesus. As a result, many Jews and also non-Jews believed in Jesus. ² But some of the Jews refused to believe that message, and told the non-Jews not to believe it. They told the non-Jewish people that the message about Jesus was not true. As a result, some of the non-Jews became angry towards the believers there. ³ So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there speaking boldly for the Lord, and the Lord Jesus enabled them to do many miracles. In this way he showed people that the message about how the Lord saves us in a way that we do not deserve is true.

Acts 14:4-7

THEME: *Before people could attack the apostles, they escaped to Lystra and Derbe.*

⁴The people who lived in Iconium city strongly disagreed with each other concerning the message about Jesus. Some of them agreed with the Jews [SYN] who did not believe that message. Others agreed with the two apostles. ⁵Then the non-Jewish people and the Jewish leaders [SYN] who opposed Paul and Barnabas talked among themselves about how they could mistreat Paul and Barnabas. Some of the important men in that city agreed to help them. Together, they decided that they would kill Paul and Barnabas by throwing stones at them. ⁶But Paul and Barnabas heard about that, so they quickly went away to Lycaonia district. They went to Lystra and Derbe towns in that district and to the area surrounding those towns. ⁷While they were in that area, they continually told the people the message about the Lord Jesus.

Acts 14:8-10

THEME: *God enabled Paul to heal a lame man.*

⁸Once while Paul was preaching to people in Lystra, a man was sitting there who was crippled in his legs. When his mother bore him he had crippled legs, so he was never able to walk. ⁹He listened as Paul was speaking about the Lord Jesus. Paul looked directly at him and could see in the man's face that he believed that the Lord Jesus could make him well. ¹⁰So Paul called out to him, "Stand up!" When the man heard that, he immediately jumped up and began to walk normally.

Acts 14:11-18

THEME: *The apostles stopped the people from worshipping them.*

¹¹When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they thought that Paul and Barnabas <were/must be> the gods that they worshipped. So they shouted excitedly in their own Lycaonia language, "Look! These people are the gods that we(inc) worship! They have made themselves look like people and have come down from the sky/heaven to help us!" ¹²They began to say that Barnabas was probably the chief god, whose name was Zeus. And they began to say that Paul was Hermes, the messenger/spokesman for the other gods. They mistakenly thought that because Paul was the one who had been speaking. ¹³Just outside the gates of the city there was a temple where the people worshipped Zeus. The priest who was there heard what Paul and Barnabas had done, so he came to the city gate, where many people had already gathered. He brought two bulls with wreaths of flowers around their necks. The priest and the other people wanted to kill the bulls as part of a ceremony to worship Paul and Barnabas. ¹⁴But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard about that, and understood that the people thought that they were gods and wanted to sacrifice the bulls to worship them, they were very distressed, so they tore their own clothes. They rushed among the people, shouting, ¹⁵"Men, <you must not kill those bulls to worship us(dl)!/why are you doing this?> [RHQ] We are not gods! We are just human beings like you! We have come to tell you some good news! We have come to tell you about the God who is all-powerful. He wants you to stop worshipping other gods, because they cannot help you. This true God made the heaven/sky and the earth and the oceans and everything in it. ¹⁶In the past, all of you non-Jewish people worshipped whatever gods that you wanted to. God let you worship them, because you did not know him. ¹⁷But he has shown us [LIT] that he acts kindly toward us(inc). He is the one who causes it to rain and causes crops to grow. He is the one who gives you plenty of food, and makes you very happy." ¹⁸The people heard what Paul said, but they still thought that they should sacrifice those bulls to worship Paul and Barnabas. But finally, the people decided not to do it.

Acts 14:19-20a

THEME: *Some Jews incited people to stone Paul at Lystra.*

¹⁹However, after that, some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and persuaded many of the people of Lystra that the message Paul had been telling them was not true. The people who believed what those Jews said became angry with Paul. They let the Jews throw stones at him until he fell down, unconscious. They all thought that he was dead, so they dragged him outside the city and left him lying there. But some of the believers in Lystra had followed them outside the city. ²⁰They came and stood around Paul, where he was lying on the ground. And Paul became conscious! He stood up and went back into the city with the believers.

Acts 14:20b-23

THEME: *The apostles revisited believers and appointed leaders.*

The next day, Paul and Barnabas left Lystra town and traveled to Derbe town. ²¹They stayed there several days and they kept telling the people the good message about Jesus. Many people became believers. After that, Paul and Barnabas started on their way back. They went again to Lystra. Then they went from there to Iconium, and then they went to Antioch in Pisidia province. ²²In each town, they helped the believers [SYN] to become strong spiritually, and they urged them to keep on trusting in the Lord Jesus. They told the believers, "It is necessary that we endure people often persecuting us(inc) before we enter the place where God will rule over us forever." ²³Paul and Barnabas appointed leaders for each congregation. And before Paul and Barnabas left each town, they gathered the believers together and spent some time

praying and <fasting/not eating any food>. Then Paul and Barnabas entrusted the *leaders and other believers* to the Lord Jesus, in whom they had believed, *in order that he would care for them*.

Acts 14:24-28

THEME: *Paul and Barnabas reported to the believers at Syrian Antioch.*

²⁴ After Paul and Barnabas had traveled through Pisidia *district*, they went *south* to Pamphylia *district*. ²⁵ *In that district*, they arrived at Perga *town* and preached God's message *about the Lord Jesus to the people there*. Then they went down to the seacoast at Attalia *town*. ²⁶ There they got on a ship and went back to Antioch *city in Syria province*. That was the place where Paul and Barnabas had been appointed {where *believers* had sent Paul and Barnabas} to go to *other places* and preach. *Antioch was the place where the believers* had asked God to kindly help Paul and Barnabas in the work that they had now completed. ²⁷ When they arrived in Antioch, they called the believers together. Then Paul and Barnabas told them all that God had helped them to do. *Specifically, they told them how God had enabled [IDM] many non-Jewish people to believe in Jesus*. ²⁸ Then Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch with the *other* believers for several months.

Acts 15:1-2

THEME: *Some Jewish believers said that God will save only people who are circumcised.*

15 ¹ Then some *Jewish* believers went down from Judea *province* to Antioch. They started teaching the *non-Jewish* believers *there*, and said, "You <must be circumcised/must have God's mark put on you> to indicate you belong to God, as Moses *commanded* in the laws that *he received from God*. If you do not do that, you will not be saved {God will not save you}." ² Paul and Barnabas strongly disagreed with those Jews and started arguing *with them*. So the *believers at Antioch* appointed Paul and Barnabas and some of the other believers to go to Jerusalem, in order that they would/could discuss this matter with the apostles and *other spiritual* leaders.

Acts 15:3-4

THEME: *Paul and Barnabas reported what God had enabled them to do.*

³ After Paul, Barnabas, and the others were given things for their trip by the congregation at *Antioch* {After the congregation at *Antioch* gave Paul, Barnabas, and the others things for their trip}, they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria *provinces*. When they stopped at different places in those provinces, they reported to the *believers* that many non-Jews in *Antioch* had become believers. As a result, all the believers in those places rejoiced greatly. ⁴ And when Paul, Barnabas, and the others arrived in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the apostles, the *other* elders, and the *other members of the congregation there* {the apostles, the *other* elders, and the *other members of the congregation there* welcomed them}. Then Paul and Barnabas reported the things that God had enabled them to do *among non-Jewish people*.

Acts 15:5

THEME: *Some Jewish believers said that non-Jewish believers must obey Moses' laws.*

⁵ But some of the *Jewish* believers who belonged to the Pharisee sect stood up *among the other believers* and said to them, "The non-Jews *who have believed in Jesus* must be circumcised, and they must be told to obey the laws that God gave to Moses."

Acts 15:6-11

THEME: *Peter told about non-Jews becoming believers when he preached to them.*

⁶ Then the apostles and the *other* elders met together in order to talk about this matter. ⁷ After they had discussed it for a long time, Peter stood up and spoke to them. He said, "Fellow believers, you *all* know that a long time ago God chose me from among you *other apostles*, in order that the non-Jewish people might *also* hear me [SYN] tell *them* the good message *about the Lord Jesus*, so that they could hear it and believe in him. So Paul and Barnabas are not the first ones to tell non-Jews about Jesus. ⁸ God knows and judges people according to what they think, *not according to who their ancestors were*. By sending the Holy Spirit to the non-Jews, just like *he had* also done for us(*inc*) Jews, he showed *me and others* that he had accepted them to be his people. ⁹ God saved us *Jews* and those non-Jews similarly, making them clean inside simply as a result of their believing in the Lord Jesus. That was exactly how he has forgiven us. ¹⁰ You are wanting to force the non-Jewish believers to obey our Jewish rituals and laws—laws that God has shown that he does not require them to obey [MET]. Your doing that is like putting a heavy burden on their necks! So then, <stop making God angry by doing that!/why are you making God angry by doing that?> [RHQ] Our ancestors and we(*inc*) Jews have never been able to bear the burden of obeying those laws! ¹¹ But we(*inc*) know that it is not because we(*inc*) try to obey those laws that God saves us(*inc*) Jews. On the contrary, we(*inc*) know that it is because of what the Lord Jesus did for us(*inc*) that we did not deserve that we(*inc*) are saved {that God saves us} from the guilt of our sins. God saves us *Jews* exactly like he saves those non-Jews who believe in the Lord Jesus."

Acts 15:12

THEME: *Barnabas and Paul reported what God had helped them to do among the non-Jews.*

¹² All the people *there* became silent *after Peter had spoken*. Then they *all* listened to Barnabas and Paul, as the two of them told about the many great miracles that God had enabled them to do among the non-Jewish people, *miracles that showed that God had accepted the non-Jews*.

Acts 15:13-21

THEME: *James recommended what they should tell the non-Jewish believers.*

¹³ When Barnabas and Paul had finished speaking, James, *the leader of the group of believers there in Jerusalem*, spoke to them. *He said*, "Fellow believers, listen to me. ¹⁴ Simon *Peter* has told you how God previously blessed the non-Jews. God did that by choosing from among them a people who would belong to him [MTY]. ¹⁵ *These words that God spoke*, words that were written by *one of the prophets* {that one of the prophets wrote} *long ago*, agree with that,

¹⁶ Later on I will return and I will re-establish the kingdom [MET] that David *ruled* and that has been {that *people* have} destroyed. My *doing that will be like* rebuilding a house that has been {that *people* have} torn down. ¹⁷ I will do that in order that all other people might seek *me*, the Lord *God*. *I will do that in order that* all the non-Jews whom I have called *to belong* to me [MTY] might seek me. *You can be certain that this will happen because I* the Lord *God*, who will do those things, have spoken *these words*. ¹⁸ *I caused my people to know about them* long ago."

¹⁹ *James continued by saying*, "Therefore I have decided *that we(inc)* should stop bothering the non-Jewish people who are turning away from *their sins and turning* to God. *That is, we should stop demanding that they obey all our laws and rituals*.

²⁰ Instead, we should write a *letter* to them, *one requiring only four things*: They should not eat *meat/food that people* have offered to idols, they should not have sex with someone to whom they are not married, they should not *eat meat from animals that have been killed by being strangled* {*people have strangled*}, and *they should not eat the blood of animals*.

²¹ In many cities, for a very long time people have been proclaiming *the laws that Moses wrote* [MTY], *laws prohibiting those things*. And every *◀Sabbath/Jewish day of rest▶* *those laws* are read {someone reads *those laws*} in the Jewish meeting places. *So if the non-Jews want to know more about those laws, they can find out in our meeting houses*."

Acts 15:22-29

THEME: *The church leaders sent messengers with a letter to non-Jewish believers.*

²² The apostles and the *other* elders, along with all the *other* members of the congregation, accepted *what James had said*. Then they decided that they should choose men from among themselves and that they should send them, along with Paul and Barnabas, to Antioch, to *let the believers there know what the leaders* at Jerusalem had decided. So they chose Judas, who was also called Barsabbas, and Silas, who were leaders among the believers *at Jerusalem*. ²³ Then they wrote the following letter *that they asked Judas and Silas to take to the believers at Antioch*: "*We(exc)* apostles and *other* leaders who are your fellow believers *send our greetings to you as we write this to you* non-Jewish believers *who live* in Antioch and *other places* in Syria and Cilicia provinces. ²⁴ People have told us that some men from among us went *to you*, although we had not told *them to do that*. They troubled/distressed you [SYN] *by telling you things* that confused your thinking. ²⁵ So *while we(exc) met together here*, we decided to choose some men and ask them to go to you, along with Barnabas and Paul, whom *we(exc)* love very much. ²⁶ Those two have put their lives in danger because of their *servicing* our Lord [MTY] Jesus Christ. ²⁷ *We(exc) have also chosen* Judas and Silas to go to you. They will tell you the same things *that we are writing*. ²⁸ The Holy Spirit and *also* we decided that you should not be required {that we should not require you} to obey a lot of burdensome *Jewish laws*. Instead, *we only require you to obey* the following instructions,

²⁹ You should not eat *food that people* have sacrificed to idols.

You should not eat blood from animals, and *you should not eat meat from animals that people have killed* by strangling them.

Also, you should not have sex with someone to whom you are not married.

Those things *especially offend Jewish believers*. *So if you avoid doing them, you will be doing what is right*. That is all/Good-bye."

Acts 15:30-32

THEME: *The letter and messengers encouraged the believers at Antioch.*

³⁰ The *four* men whom *they* had chosen went *from Jerusalem* down to Antioch city. *When* all the believers *there* had assembled together, *Judas and Silas* gave the letter to them. ³¹ When the believers *there* read the letter, they rejoiced, *because its message* encouraged them. ³² *Just like Paul and Barnabas were* *◀prophets/men who spoke messages from God▶*. ³² Judas and Silas were also prophets. They spoke a lot and encouraged the believers *there*, and helped them to trust more strongly *in the Lord Jesus*.

Acts 15:33-35

THEME: *Paul and Barnabas continued to teach and preach in Antioch.*

³³ After Judas and Silas had stayed there for some time and were ready to return to Jerusalem, the believers at Antioch wished them well, and the believers prayed that God would protect them as they traveled. So the two men started to go back to the leaders in Jerusalem who had asked them to go to Antioch.^c ³⁵ However, Paul and Barnabas continued to stay in Antioch. While they were there, they, along with many others, were teaching people and preaching to them the message about the Lord Jesus.

Acts 15:36-41

THEME: *Paul and Barnabas separated, and Paul chose Silas.*

³⁶ After some time Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and visit the fellow believers in every city where we previously proclaimed the message about the Lord Jesus. In that way, we will know how well they are continuing to believe in the Lord Jesus." ³⁷ Barnabas agreed with Paul, and said that he wanted to take John, whose other name was Mark, along with them again. ³⁸ However, Paul told Barnabas that he thought that it would not be good to take Mark with them, because Mark had deserted them when they were previously in Pamphylia region, and had not continued to work with them. ³⁹ Paul and Barnabas strongly disagreed with each other about that, so they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark along with him and they got on a ship and went to Cyprus Island. ⁴⁰ Paul chose Silas, who had returned to Antioch, to work with him. The believers there asked the Lord God to graciously help Paul and Silas. Then the two of them departed from Antioch. ⁴¹ Paul continued traveling with Silas through Syria and Cilicia provinces. In those places he was helping the congregations to trust strongly in the Lord Jesus.

Acts 16:1-3

THEME: *Paul chose Timothy to work with him and Silas.*

16 ¹ Paul and Silas went to Derbe city and visited the believers there. Next they went to Lystra city. A believer whose name was Timothy lived there. His mother was a Jewish believer, but his father was a Greek. ² The believers in Lystra and Iconium said good things about Timothy, ³ and Paul wanted to take Timothy with him when he went to other places, so he circumcised Timothy. He did that so that the Jews who lived in those places would accept Timothy, because they knew that his non-Jewish father had not allowed him to be circumcised {anyone to circumcise his son}.

Acts 16:4-5

THEME: *Paul, Silas and Timothy told believers in Galatia what the church leaders had decided.*

⁴ So Timothy went with Paul and Silas and they traveled to many other towns. In each town they told the believers the rules that had been decided by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem (that the apostles and elders in Jerusalem had decided) that non-Jewish believers should obey.

⁵ God was helping the believers in those towns to trust more strongly in the Lord Jesus, and every day more people became believers.

Acts 16:6-10

THEME: *Because of a vision in Troas, Paul went to preach in Macedonia.*

⁶ Paul and his companions wanted/planned to enter Asia province and preach the message about Jesus there, but they were prevented by the Holy Spirit {the Holy Spirit prevented them} from going there. So they traveled through Phrygia and Galatia provinces. ⁷ They arrived at the border of Mysia province and they wanted to go north into Bithynia province. But again the Spirit of Jesus showed them that they should not go there. ⁸ So they went through Mysia province and arrived at Troas, a port city. I, Luke, joined them there. ⁹ That night God gave Paul a vision in which he saw a man who was a native of Macedonia province. He was standing some distance away, and he was earnestly calling to Paul, "Please come over here to Macedonia and help us!" ¹⁰ The next morning we(exc) immediately got ready to go to Macedonia, because we believed that God had called us to go and preach the good message to the people there.

^c Some Greek manuscripts have for verse 34, "But just before they left, Silas decided to stay there in Antioch." Each translator should choose between this text and the implied information that we have given in verse 40. Each should choose the way to translate that seems the most preferable.

Acts 16:11-12

THEME: *Paul's company went from Troas to Philippi.*

¹¹ So we(exc) got on a ship in Troas and sailed across *the sea* to Samothrace Island. We spent the night there, and the next day we sailed again across the sea and arrived at Neapolis port/town. ¹² Then we left Neapolis and went by land to Philippi. It was a very important city in Macedonia province, where many Roman citizens lived. We stayed in Philippi several days.

Acts 16:13-15

THEME: *Paul preached the gospel and Lydia became a believer.*

¹³ On the first <Sabbath/Jewish day of rest> after we(exc) arrived, we went outside the city gate down to the river. We had heard someone say that Jewish people gathered to pray there. When we arrived there, we saw some women who had gathered to pray. So we sat down and began to tell them the message about Jesus. ¹⁴ A woman whose name was Lydia was one of those who were listening to Paul. She was a non-Jewish woman, from Thyatira city, who bought and sold expensive purple cloth. She had accepted what the Jews believe about God. The Lord God caused her to pay attention to the message that Paul preached, and she believed it. The members of her household also heard the good message and believed in Jesus [MTY]. ¹⁵ After Paul and Silas baptized Lydia and the others who lived in her house [MTY] {After Lydia and the others who lived in her house were baptized}, she invited us to go and stay in her home. She said, "You(pl) know that I now believe in the Lord Jesus, so please come and stay in my house." She persuaded us to do that, so we(exc) stayed there.

Acts 16:16-24

THEME: *Paul expelled a demon from a slave girl, so officials imprisoned Paul and Silas.*

¹⁶ Another day, while we(exc) were going to the place where people regularly gathered to pray, we met a young woman who was a slave. An evil spirit was enabling her to be a ventriloquist and to tell people what would happen to them. People paid a lot of money to the men who were her owners, in return for her telling them things that she said would happen to them. ¹⁷ This young woman followed Paul and the rest of us. She continually shouted, "These men serve the God who is the greatest of all gods! They are telling you how <God can save you so that he will not punish you/to be saved>" ¹⁸ She continued to do that for many days. Finally Paul became irritated. So he turned toward the young woman and rebuked the evil spirit that was in her. He said, "By the authority [MTY] of Jesus Christ, I command you(sg) to come out of this young woman!" Right away the evil spirit left her. ¹⁹ And then her owners realized that she could no longer earn money for them because she could no longer predict what would happen to people, so they were angry. They grabbed Paul and Silas and forcefully took them to the public square, to the place where the government authorities and a lot of other people were gathered. ²⁰ The owners of the young woman brought them to the city officials and told them, "These men are Jews, and they are greatly troubling the people in [MTY] our city. ²¹ They are teaching that we(inc) should follow customs that our laws do not allow us Romans to consider to be correct or to obey!" ²² Many of the crowd joined those who were accusing Paul and Silas, and started beating them. Then the Roman authorities commanded soldiers to tear the shirts off Paul and Silas and to beat them with rods/sticks. ²³ So the soldiers beat Paul and Silas vigorously with rods. After that, they took them and shoved them into the prison. They told the jailer that he should lock them up securely. Because the officials had commanded him to do that, the jailer shoved Paul and Silas into the cell that was farthest inside. There, he made them sit down on the floor/ground and stretch out their legs. Then he fastened their ankles in grooves between two large wooden beams, so that Paul and Silas could not move their legs.

Acts 16:25-34

THEME: *Paul and Silas helped the jailer and his household to become believers.*

²⁵ About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying aloud and praising God by singing hymns. The other prisoners were listening attentively to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a very strong earthquake. It shook the entire jail [SYN] and its foundation [SYN]. The earthquake caused all the doors of the jail to open suddenly, and caused all the chains that fastened the prisoners to fall off. ²⁷ The jailer woke up and saw that the doors of the jail were open. He thought that the prisoners had escaped. So he pulled out his sword in order to kill himself, because he knew that the officials would kill him if the prisoners escaped. ²⁸ Paul saw the jailer and shouted to him, "Do not harm yourself! We(exc) prisoners are all here!" ²⁹ The jailer shouted to someone to bring torches/lanterns, and after they brought them, he rushed into the jail and knelt down in front of Paul and Silas. He was very much afraid, so much so that he was trembling/shaking. ³⁰ Then he brought Paul and Silas out of the jail and asked: "Sirs, what do I need to do to be saved from being punished for my sins?" ³¹ They answered, "Trust in what the Lord Jesus has done for you, and you will be saved {God will save you}, and the others who live in [MTY] your house will also be saved if they believe in Jesus."

³²⁻³⁴ Then the jailer took Paul and Silas into his house, washed their wounds, and gave them a meal. He woke up all the people in his house and Paul and Silas told all of them the message about the Lord Jesus. They all believed in him. Immediately after that, the jailer and all his family were baptized {Paul and Silas baptized the jailer and all his family}. They were very happy, because now they all believed in God.

Acts 16:35-40

THEME: Paul and Silas encouraged the believers and then left Philippi.

³⁵The next morning, the *Roman* officials commanded some police officers to go to the jail to say to the jailer, "Our bosses say, 'Let those two prisoners go now!'" ³⁶After the officers went and told that to the jailer, he went and told Paul, "The *Roman* authorities have sent a message(sg) saying that I should release you(sg) and Silas from prison. So you two can leave the jail now. Now you can go peacefully!" ³⁷But Paul said to the police officers, "The authorities commanded men to beat us in front of a crowd before those authorities had learned if we(exc) had done anything wrong! Then they ordered men to shove us into jail! But that was not legal, because we(exc) are Roman citizens! And now they want [RHQ] to send us away secretly! We will not accept that! Those *Roman* officials must come themselves and tell us that they are sorry, and take us out of jail." ³⁸So the police officers went and told the city authorities what Paul had said. When those authorities heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were afraid that someone would report to more important officials what they had done, and as a result they would be punished {those officials would punish them}. ³⁹So the city authorities came to Paul and Silas and told them that they were sorry for what they had done to them. The authorities brought them out of the jail, and repeatedly asked them to leave the city soon. ⁴⁰After Paul and Silas left the jail, they went to Lydia's house. There they met with her and the other believers. They encouraged the believers to continue trusting in the Lord Jesus, and then the two apostles left Philippi.

Acts 17:1-4

THEME: In Thessalonica, Paul convinced many people that Jesus is the Messiah.

17 ¹Paul and Silas traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia towns and arrived at Thessalonica city. There was a Jewish meeting place there. ²<On the Sabbath/On the Jewish rest day> Paul went into the meeting house, as he usually did. For three weeks he went there on each Jewish day of rest. Referring to the Scriptures about the Messiah, he spoke to the people who were there. ³He explained and showed that the prophets wrote that the Messiah needed to die and <to become alive again/to be raised from the dead afterwards>. He told them: "This man Jesus, whom I am telling you about, is our Messiah. He died and became alive again, just like the prophets predicted." ⁴Some of the Jews there were persuaded by {believed} what Paul had said and began to associate with Paul and Silas. There were also many non-Jewish people there who worshipped God and many important women who also believed the message about Jesus, and they began to associate with Paul and Silas.

Acts 17:5-9

THEME: Some Jews there incited people to oppose Paul and Silas.

⁵But some leaders of the Jews there in Thessalonica became jealous because many people believed what Paul taught. So they went to the public square and persuaded some lazy men who were loitering there to follow them. In this way, the leaders of the Jews gathered a crowd and incited them to become noisy and start a riot against Paul and Silas. Those Jews and others forced their way into the house of a man named Jason. He was the man who had invited Paul and Silas to stay at his house. They wanted to bring Paul and Silas outside to where the crowd of people was waiting. ⁶They discovered that Paul and Silas were not there, but they found Jason and grabbed him. They dragged him and some of the other believers to where the city officials/authorities and many other people were gathered. The men who had brought Jason shouted, "Those two men have caused trouble [IDM] everywhere [HYP] they have gone. Now they have come to our city, ⁷and this fellow Jason invited them to stay at his house. All the people of this sect oppose what our Emperor has decreed. They say that another person, whose name is Jesus, is the real king!" ⁸When the crowd of people that had gathered and the city authorities heard that, they became very angry and excited. ⁹They wanted to put the believers in jail. But instead, the officials made Jason and the other believers pay a fine and told them that they would give the money back to them if Paul and Silas did not cause any more trouble. Then the authorities let Jason and those other believers go.

Acts 17:10-12

THEME: In Berea, Paul helped many Jews and non-Jews to believe in Jesus.

¹⁰So that same night, the believers sent Paul and Silas out of Thessalonica to Berea town. When Paul and Silas arrived there, they went to the Jewish meeting place, on a day when people had gathered there. ¹¹The Jews in Thessalonica had not been very willing to listen to God's message, but the Jews who lived in Berea were very willing to listen, so they listened very eagerly to the message about Jesus. Every day they read the Scriptures for themselves to find out if what Paul said about the Messiah was true. ¹²As a result, many of the Jewish people believed in Jesus, and also some of the important non-Jewish women and many non-Jewish men believed in him.

Acts 17:13-15

THEME: *Jews from Thessalonica incited people to oppose Paul.*

¹³ But then the Jews in Thessalonica heard *people tell them* that Paul was in Berea and that he was preaching the message from God *about Jesus*. So they went to Berea and *told people there that what Paul was teaching was not true*. Thus, they caused many of those people to get angry *at Paul*. ¹⁴ So *several of the believers in Berea* took Paul to the coast *to go to another province*. But Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. ¹⁵ When Paul and the other men *arrived at the coast, they got on a ship and went to Athens city*. Then Paul said *to the men who had come with him*, "Tell Silas and Timothy to come to me *here in Athens* as soon as they can." Then those men left *Athens and returned to Berea*.

Acts 17:16-17

THEME: *In Athens, idols distressed Paul, so he talked to many people about Jesus.*

¹⁶ In Athens, Paul waited for Silas and Timothy *to arrive*. *In the meantime, he walked around in the city*. He became very distressed/disturbed because he saw that throughout [HYP] the city there were many idols. ¹⁷ So he went to the Jewish meeting place and talked *about Jesus* with the Jews, and also with the Greeks who had accepted what the Jews believe. He also went to the public square/center every day and talked to the people *whom he met* there.

Acts 17:18

THEME: *When Paul talked about Jesus, he perplexed some teachers.*

¹⁸ Paul met some teachers who liked to talk about what people should believe. *People called* some of them Epicureans and *they called* others Stoics. They told Paul *what they believed*, and they asked him *what he believed*. Then some of them said *to one another*, "This ignorant person is just talking nonsense [RHQ]!" Others said, "*We(exc) think* that he is teaching people about *<foreign gods/new gods that we(exc) have not heard about>*." They said that because Paul was telling them that Jesus *had died and had become alive again afterwards*. *They had not heard that message before*.

Acts 17:19-21

THEME: *Athens City council members asked Paul to explain what he had been teaching.*

¹⁹ So they took him to the place where the city council met. *When they arrived* there, they said to Paul, "*Please tell us, what is this new message that you(sg) are teaching people?*" ²⁰ You are teaching some things that *startle us(exc)*, so we want to know what they mean." ²¹ *They said that, because* the people of Athens and also the people from other regions who lived there continually talked about what was new *to them*, or they listened to *others tell* what was new.

Acts 17:22-31

THEME: *Paul told them about the God whom they did not know.*

²² Then Paul stood up before the men of the city council and said, "Citizens of Athens, I see that you *<are very religious/think that it is very important to worship many gods>*. ²³ I say *that* because, while I was walking along and observing the objects *that represent different gods that you worship*, I even saw an altar that had these words *that someone had carved on it: THIS HONORS THE GOD THAT WE(exc) DO NOT KNOW*. So now I will tell you about *that God* whom you worship but you do not know.

²⁴ "He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Because he rules over all *beings in heaven and on earth*, he does not dwell in shrines that people have made. ²⁵ He does not need to have anything made for him by people [MTY] {to have people [MTY] make [MTY] anything for him}, because everything that exists belongs to him. He is the one who causes *<us(inc)/all people>* to live and breathe, and *he gives us* all the things *that we(inc) need*.

²⁶ "*In the beginning*, God created one man, and from him God produced all *<the ethnic groups/the nations>* that now live everywhere on the earth. He also decided where each ethnic group of people should live and how long they should live *there*. ²⁷ He wanted people to realize that they need him. Then maybe they would seek for him and find him. *God wants us to seek him*, although he is *really* close [LIT] to each one of us. ²⁸ As someone has said, '*It is only* because he enables us that *we(inc) live and move and do what we do*.' And, as some of your own poets have said, '*We(inc) are God's children*.'

²⁹ "Therefore, because we are God's children, *we(inc)* should not think that he is anything like an image *that people have made* of gold or silver or stone. Those images are designed and skillfully made {People design and make those images}, *but they are not alive*. ³⁰ During the times when people did not know *what God wanted them to do*, he did not *immediately* punish *them for what they did*. But now God commands all people everywhere to turn away from their evil behavior. ³¹ *He tells us* that on a certain day that he has chosen he is going to judge *all of us(inc) people in* [MTY] the world. He has appointed a *certain man to judge us, and that man will judge each of us* fairly/justly. God has shown to all *people that he has appointed that man to judge everyone*, because God *<caused him to become alive again after he had died/raised him from the dead>*."

Acts 17:32-34

THEME: Some council members believed in Jesus.

³²When the men of the council heard *Paul* say that *«a man had become alive again after he had died/someone had been raised from the dead»*, some of them laughed scornfully. But others said, “We(*exc*) would like you(*sg*) to tell us more about this, some other time.” ³³After they said that, Paul departed from the council *meeting*. ³⁴However, some of the people there went along with Paul and became believers. Among those *who believed in Jesus* was a member of the council whose name was Dionysius. Also, an *important* woman whose name was Damaris and some other people *who had heard Paul’s message also believed in Jesus*.

Acts 18:1-4

THEME: In Corinth, Paul helped many people to become believers.

18 ¹After that, Paul left Athens *city* and went to Corinth *city*. ²There he met a Jew whose name was Aquila, who grew up in Pontus *province*. Aquila and his wife Priscilla had recently come from Rome, in Italy. *They had previously left Rome* because Claudius, *the Roman Emperor*, had ordered that all the Jews must leave Rome. Paul went to see Aquila and Priscilla. ³Those two made tents *to earn «money./a living.»* Paul also made tents, so he stayed with them and they all worked together. ⁴Every Sabbath, Paul *went* to the Jewish meeting place, where he spoke forcefully to both Jews and non-Jews. He repeatedly tried to persuade them *that Jesus is the Messiah*.

Acts 18:5-8

THEME: Paul helped many non-Jews become believers.

⁵Then Silas and Timothy arrived there from Macedonia *province*. After they arrived, Paul *did not make tents any more*. He used all his time preaching *the message about Jesus in the Jewish meeting place*. He continued to tell the Jews *that the Messiah they knew about was Jesus*. ⁶But the Jews began to oppose Paul and to say evil things about him. So he shook *the dust from his clothes to show them that they were displeasing God*. Then he said to them, “If God punishes you, it will be your [SYN] own fault [MTY], not mine! From now on I will go *and preach* to non-Jewish people!” ⁷So Paul left *the worship house* and went into a house that was next to it, *and preached there*. Titius Justus, the owner of the house, was a non-Jewish man who had accepted what the Jews believe. ⁸*After that*, the ruler of the Jewish meeting place, *whose name was Crispus*, and all of his family [MTY] believed in the Lord *Jesus*. Many other people in Corinth who listened *to Paul* also believed *in Jesus*. Then they were baptized. *But there were people who still opposed Paul and his preaching*.

Acts 18:9-11

THEME: Jesus commanded Paul to continue speaking about him, so Paul did that.

⁹One night Paul had a vision in which the Lord *Jesus* said to him, “Do not be afraid *of those who oppose you*. Instead, you should continue speaking *to people about me*. Do not stop, ¹⁰because I *will help* you and no one will be able to harm you(*sg*) *here*. Keep telling them about me, because there are many people in this city who will *believe in me*.” ¹¹So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching the people the message from God *about Jesus*.

Acts 18:12-17

THEME: Gallio refused to judge Paul.

¹²When Gallio was the Roman governor of Achaia *province*, the Jewish *leaders* [SYN] there got together and seized Paul. They took him before the governor *and accused him*, ¹³saying, “This man is teaching people *a false religion, leading them* to worship God in ways that are contrary to our *Jewish laws*.” ¹⁴When Paul was about to speak [MTY] *to defend himself*, Gallio said to the Jews, “If this man had acted deceitfully or disobeyed *any of our Roman laws*, I would listen *patiently* to what you Jews *want to tell me*. ¹⁵However, you are merely arguing about words and names and your own *Jewish laws*, so you yourselves need to resolve this. I refuse to judge these things!” ¹⁶After Gallio *had said that*, he *commanded some soldiers/guards* that that *they expel those Jewish leaders* from the courtroom. ¹⁷Then *the mob* grabbed the leader of the Jewish meeting place, Sosthenes. They beat him, right there in front of the courthouse. Even though Gallio *saw them do this*, he did nothing about it.

Acts 18:18-21

THEME: At Ephesus, Paul parted from Priscilla and Aquila.

¹⁸Paul stayed on with the believers in Corinth for *«many days./some time.»* Then he left the believers there, and went with Priscilla and *her husband* Aquila. They went down to Cenchrea, *a port city*. There Paul had his head shaved {*someone shave his head*} in order to complete a vow that he had taken. Then they got on a ship and sailed for Syria *province*. They arrived at Ephesus *city*, and Priscilla and Aquila stayed there.

Before Paul left Ephesus, he entered the Jewish meeting place and lectured to the Jews. ²⁰ They asked him to stay longer, but he refused. ²¹ But, as he left, he told them, "I will come back, if God wills/desires me to do that." Then, because he wanted to be in Jerusalem to complete the vow, he got on a ship that sailed from Ephesus.

Acts 18:22-23

THEME: Paul visited Jerusalem, then he went on to Antioch in Syria and then he returned to visit the believers throughout Galatia and Phrygia.

²² When the ship arrived at Caesarea, a port city, Paul got off. He went up to Jerusalem and greeted the believers there. Then he went back down to Antioch city in Syria province.

²³ Paul spent some time with the believers there. Then he left Antioch and traveled to several towns that he had visited previously in Galatia and Phrygia provinces. He taught all of the believers more of the message from God about Jesus.

Acts 18:24-26

THEME: Priscilla and Aquila instructed Apollos about the gospel.

²⁴ While Paul was traveling in Galatia and Phrygia, a Jewish man whose name was Apollos came to Ephesus. He was a native of Alexandria city. He spoke eloquently and he knew the Scriptures thoroughly. ²⁵ Other believers had taught him some things about how the Lord Jesus desires that people should conduct themselves, and he taught those things very enthusiastically to people. He had heard some of the things that Jesus did and said, and he taught those facts accurately to people. However, he was teaching incompletely about Jesus, because he knew only what John the Baptizer had taught people whom he baptized. ²⁶ Apollos went to the Jewish meeting place, and he told the people there very confidently the things that he had learned. When Priscilla and Aquila heard what he taught, they invited him to their home. There they explained more accurately to him the way that God gives people eternal life.

Acts 18:27-28

THEME: Apollos helped believers in Achaia.

²⁷ When Apollos decided that he would like to go to Achaia province, the believers in Ephesus told him that it would be good for him to do that. So they wrote a letter to the believers in Achaia saying that they should welcome Apollos. So Apollos got on a ship and went to Corinth. After he arrived, he greatly helped those whom God had kindly enabled to believe in Jesus. ²⁸ Apollos was vigorously arguing publicly with the leaders of the Jews while many other people listened. By quoting from the Scriptures, he proved to them that Jesus was the Messiah.

Acts 19:1-7

THEME: Paul helped some men to become real believers in Jesus.

19 ¹ While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul left the places in Phrygia and Galatia provinces where he had been visiting, and traveled through Asia province back to Ephesus. He met some people who said that they were believers. ² He asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed God's message?" They answered, "No, we(exc) did not. We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." ³ So Paul asked, "So when you were baptized, what were you showing?" They replied, "We were showing that we(exc) believed what John the Baptizer taught." ⁴ Paul said, "John baptized people who turned away from their sinful behavior. He also told the people to believe in the one who would come after he had come, and that was Jesus." ⁵ So, when those men heard that, they were baptized to affirm that they believed [MTY] in the Lord Jesus. ⁶ After that, Paul placed his hands one by one, and the power of the Holy Spirit came upon each of them. The Holy Spirit enabled them to speak in various languages [MTY] that they had not learned, and they also spoke messages that the Holy Spirit revealed to them. ⁷ There were about twelve men whom Paul baptized and who received the power of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 19:8-10

THEME: Paul helped many people in Asia province to hear the gospel.

⁸ For three months after that, Paul entered the Jewish meeting place in Ephesus on each <Sabbath/Jewish day of rest>, and he spoke boldly. He convincingly taught the people about how God wanted to rule [MET] their lives. ⁹ A few of the people in the meeting house believed the message about Jesus. But some of the people would not believe that message and did not want to continue to hear it. While many people were listening, they said many bad things about the way for people to receive eternal life about which Paul was preaching. So Paul left them and took the believers with him to meet in another place. He taught every day in a lecture hall that a man whose name was Tyrannus lectured in/owned. ¹⁰ For two years Paul continued to teach people in that building. In this way, most of [HYP] the Jews and non-Jews who lived in Asia province heard the message about the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19:11-12

THEME: *God enabled Paul to do amazing miracles.*

¹¹ Also, God gave Paul the power [MTY] to do amazing miracles. ¹² *If those who were sick could not come to Paul, handkerchiefs or aprons that Paul had touched would be taken and placed on the sick people {others would take and place on the sick people handkerchiefs or aprons that Paul had touched}. As a result, those sick people would become well, and evil spirits that troubled people would leave.*

Acts 19:13-17

THEME: *People honored Jesus' name, after Jewish exorcists misused it and failed.*

¹³ There were also some Jews who traveled around to *various places*, and they commanded the evil spirits *in those places* to depart from them. *Certain ones of those Jews once* tried to command the evil spirits to come out of people by saying "I command you by the authority [MTY] of the Lord Jesus, the man about whom Paul preaches, to come out!" ¹⁴ There were seven men who were doing that. They were sons of a man named Sceva, a Jew, *who called himself* a chief priest. ¹⁵ *But one day as they were doing that*, the evil spirit *refused to come out of that person. Instead*, he said to them, "I know Jesus, and I know *that he has authorized Paul to expel demons*. <But no one has authorized you to do anything to me!/who authorized you to do anything to me?> [RHQ]" ¹⁶ *After saying that, suddenly* the man who was controlled by the evil spirit jumped on the seven Jewish men, *one after another*, knocked all of them down, and beat each of them severely. He tore off their clothes and wounded them, causing them to bleed. So, *greatly frightened, they all* ran out of the house. ¹⁷ All the people who lived in Ephesus, both Jews and non-Jews, heard what had happened. So they were afraid [MTY]. They honored the Lord Jesus [MTY] *because they realized that he was very powerful*.

Acts 19:18-22

THEME: *Many believers confessed their former sins and burned their books of magic.*

¹⁸ *At that time*, while other believers were listening, many believers confessed the evil things that they had been doing. ¹⁹ Several of those who had *previously* practiced sorcery gathered up their scrolls *that told how to work* magic and burned them in a public place. When people added up how much those scrolls had cost, they realized that altogether the amount was fifty thousand valuable silver coins.

²⁰ As a result, many more people heard [MTY] the message about the Lord *Jesus*, and the message powerfully *changed their lives*.

²¹ After those things had happened, Paul decided that he wanted to go to Jerusalem, but he decided that *first* he would visit *the believers in Macedonia and Achaia provinces again*. Paul said, "After I have been to Jerusalem, I must also go to Rome." ²² He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, ahead to Macedonia. But Paul stayed a little longer *in Ephesus city*, in Asia province.

Acts 19:23-24

THEME: *Demetrius made silver shrines of the goddess Artemis.*

²³ *Soon after that*, some of the people there tried to make a lot of [LIT] trouble for the people who believed the way *God revealed for us(inc) to receive eternal life*. ²⁴ There was a man there whose name was Demetrius who made little images out of silver. *They were models* of the temple of a *goddess whose name was Artemis*. Demetrius and the other men *who made those little images* earned a lot of [LIT] money from *selling those images*.

Acts 19:25-31

THEME: *Demetrius incited people to shout and to riot.*

²⁵ Demetrius called a meeting of his workmen and also of others who made the little silver images. He said to them, "Men, you know that we(inc) earn a lot of money doing our kind of work. ²⁶ Also, you know that *this fellow Paul* has persuaded many people who live in Ephesus *to no longer buy the images that we make*. *Now even the people from many other towns in our province no longer want to buy what we make*. This fellow tells people that the gods that we have made *and worship* are not gods *and that we should not worship them*. ²⁷ *If people continue to listen to him*, soon they will ruin our business. Besides, they will no longer think that they should *come to the temple of Artemis to worship her*. *People all over our Asia province and everywhere [HYP] else worship our great goddess Artemis*. *Soon people may no longer consider that Artemis is great!"* ²⁸ All the men there were very angry *at Paul* when they heard what Demetrius said. They began to shout, "The goddess Artemis of us Ephesians is very great!" ²⁹ Many of the other people in the city heard the shouting and went *and joined the crowd*. *They also became angry at Paul* and began shouting. *Several of the people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, two men from Macedonia* who had been traveling with Paul. *Then the whole crowd of people ran, dragging those men along with them*, to the city stadium. ³⁰ Paul also wanted to go *to the stadium and speak* to the people, but the other believers would not let him go there. ³¹ Also, some government officials of that province who were friends of Paul *heard what was happening*. So they sent someone to tell him *urgently* not to go into the stadium.

Acts 19:32-34

THEME: *The crowd shouted, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”*

³² The crowd of people *in the stadium* continued shouting. Some shouted one thing, and some shouted something else. But most of them did not even know what the meeting was about! ³³ One of the Jews *there was named Alexander*. Some of the Jews pushed him to the front of the stadium, *so that he could speak to the crowd of people*. So Alexander motioned with his hands to the crowd, *wanting them to be quiet*. He wanted to tell them that *the Jews were not responsible for the riot*.

³⁴ But *many of the non-Jewish people* knew that Alexander was a Jew. *They also knew that the Jews did not worship the goddess Artemis*. So *the non-Jews there* unitedly and repeatedly shouted for about two hours, “Great is the goddess Artemis whom *we(inc)* Ephesians worship!”

Acts 19:35-41

THEME: *The city secretary quieted, warned and dismissed the crowd.*

³⁵ Then the city secretary made the crowd stop shouting, and he said to them, “My fellow-citizens, everyone in the world knows [RHQ] that *we(inc) people who live in Ephesus city* guard the temple *where we worship* the great goddess Artemis. Also, *everyone knows that we(inc) watch over the sacred image of our goddess* that fell down from heaven! ³⁶ Of course everyone knows that, and no one can say that these things are not true. So you should be quiet now. Do not suddenly do anything <foolish/that will cause us trouble>. ³⁷ You *should not* have brought these *two men here*, *because they have not done anything evil*. They have not gone into our temples and taken things *from there*. And they have not spoken evil of our goddess. ³⁸ Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow-workmen want to accuse anyone *about anything bad*, *they should do it in the right way*. There are courts *that you can go to when you want to accuse someone*, and there are judges *there who have been appointed by the government {whom the government has appointed}*. You can accuse *anyone there*. ³⁹ But if you want to ask about something else, *you should ask for other officials* to resolve it when *those officials* legally assemble. ⁴⁰ *And this is certainly not a legal meeting! Resolve this legally* because, if *we(inc)* do not, I am afraid *that the governor* will hear about all this noise *that you have made* and will say that *we(inc)* were trying to rebel *against the government*. If he would ask me what you were all shouting about, I would not be able to give him an answer.” ⁴¹ That is what the city secretary said *to the crowd*. Then he told them all to go *home*. *So they left*.

Acts 20:1-6

THEME: *After being in Macedonia and Greece, Paul went to Troas.*

20 ¹ After the people at Ephesus had stopped rioting, Paul summoned the believers. He encouraged them *to continue to trust in the Lord Jesus*. Soon after that, he told them “Good-bye” and left to go to Macedonia province. ² After he arrived there, he visited *each town where there were believers* and encouraged them. Then he arrived in Greece province, *which is also called Achaia*. ³ He stayed there for three months. Then he planned to return to Syria by ship, but *he heard that* some of the Jews [SYN] *in that area* were planning to kill him *as he traveled*. So he decided instead to go *by land*, and he traveled again through Macedonia. ⁴ The men who were going to travel with him *to Jerusalem* were Sopater, *who was a son of Pyrrhus*, who grew up in Berea town; Aristarchus and Secundus, who were from Thessalonica city; Gaius, *who was from Derbe town*; Timothy, *who was from Galatia province*; and Tychicus and Trophimus who were from Asia province. ⁵ Those seven men went ahead of Paul and me, Luke, *by ship from Macedonia*, so they got to Troas *before we did* and waited for *the two of us* there. ⁶ But *we two(exc)* traveled *by land* as far as Philippi city. After the Jewish festival *when they eat unleavened bread*, we got on a ship *that was going from the port near Philippi to Troas city*. After five days *we(exc)* arrived at Troas and we met the other men who had traveled there *ahead of us*. Then we *all* stayed in Troas for seven days.

Acts 20:7-12

THEME: *At Troas, Paul encouraged believers by resurrecting Eutychus.*

⁷ <On Sunday evening/On the evening of the first day of the week>, *we(exc) and the other believers there* gathered together to celebrate the Lord’s Supper *and to eat other food* [SYN]. Paul spoke to the believers. He continued teaching them until midnight, because he was planning to leave Troas the next day. ⁸ Many oil lamps were burning in the upstairs room in which *we(exc)* had gathered, *so the fumes caused some people to become sleepy*. ⁹ A young man whose name was Eutychus was there. He was seated on *the sill of an open window on the third story of the house*. As Paul continued talking for a long time, Eutychus became sleepier and sleepier. Finally, he was sound/really asleep. He fell *out of the window* from the third story down *to the ground*. *Some of the believers went down immediately* and picked him up. *But he was dead*. ¹⁰ Paul *also* went down. He lay down and stretched out on top of the young man and put his arms around him. Then he said *to the people who were standing around*, “Do not worry, he is alive *again now!*” ¹¹ Then Paul, *along with the others*, went upstairs again and they ate the Lord’s Supper and other food [SYN]. Afterwards, Paul conversed with the believers until dawn. Then he left. ¹² The *other* people took the young man *home*, and were greatly encouraged because he was alive *again*.

Acts 20:13-16

THEME: *Paul and his companions traveled from Troas to Miletus.*

¹³We then went to the ship. Paul did not get on the ship *with us in Troas*, because he preferred to go *more quickly* overland to Assos town. The rest of us got on the ship and sailed for Assos. ¹⁴We(*exc*) met Paul in Assos. He got on the ship with us, and we sailed to Mitylene town. ¹⁵The day after we *reached Mitylene*, we *sailed from there* and arrived at a place near Kios Island. The day after that, we sailed to Samos Island. The next day we *left Samos* and sailed to Miletus town. ¹⁶*On the way to Miletus, the ship passed not very far from Ephesus city.* Paul had *earlier* decided that he would not get off the ship in Ephesus, because he did not want to spend *several* days in Asia province. If possible, he wanted to arrive in Jerusalem by the *time of the Pentecost festival, and the time of that festival was near.*

Acts 20:17-21

THEME: *Paul reminded the Ephesian elders how he had conducted himself and had taught them.*

¹⁷When the ship arrived at Miletus, Paul sent a messenger to Ephesus to ask the elders of the congregation to come to talk with him.

¹⁸When the elders arrived, Paul said to them, “You personally know how I *conducted myself among you the entire time* that I was with you, from the first day when I arrived *here in Asia province until the day I left.* ¹⁹*You know how* I was serving the Lord Jesus very humbly and how I sometimes wept *about people.* You also know how I suffered because the Jews [SYN] who were not believers often tried to harm me. ²⁰You also know that, as I preached God’s message to you, I never left out anything that would help you. You know that I taught you God’s message when many people were present, and I *also went to your homes* and taught it there. ²¹I preached both to Jews and to non-Jews, telling them *all* that they must turn away from their sinful behavior. *I also told them they should believe in our Lord Jesus.*

Acts 20:22-31

THEME: *Paul told them that they would never see him again.*

²²“And now note this: I am going to Jerusalem, because God’s Spirit has clearly shown me that I must go there. I do not know what will happen to me *while I am there.* ²³But I do know that in each city *where I have stopped*, the Holy Spirit has <told me/caused the believers to tell me> that *in Jerusalem* people will put me in prison [PRS] and will cause me to suffer [PRS]. ²⁴But I do not care even if people kill me, if first I am able to finish the work [MET] that the Lord Jesus has told me *to do.* He appointed me to tell people the good message that God saves us by doing for us what we do not deserve. ²⁵I have preached to you the message about how God desires to rule *people’s lives.* But now I know that today is the last time that you fellow believers will see me [SYN]. ²⁶So I want you all to understand that if anyone *who has heard me preach* dies *without trusting in Jesus*, it is not my fault [MTY], ²⁷because I told you [LIT] everything [HYP] that God has planned for us(*inc*). ²⁸You leaders must continue to believe and obey God’s message. You must also help all the other believers [MET] for whom the Holy Spirit has caused you to be responsible [MTY]. Watch over [MET] yourselves and the other believers as a shepherd *watches over his sheep.* God bought them with the blood *that flowed from his Son’s body on the cross.* ²⁹I know *very well* that after I leave, *people who teach* [MET] *false doctrines* will come among you and will do great harm to the believers. *They will be like fierce wolves that kill the sheep.* ³⁰Even in your own group of believers there will be some who will deceive *other* believers by teaching them messages that are false. They will teach those messages so that some people *will believe them* and will become their followers. ³¹So watch out *that none of you stops believing the true message about our Lord Jesus!* Remember that day and night for *about* three years I repeatedly taught you that message, and warned you with tears *in my eyes not to believe any other message.*

Acts 20:32-35

THEME: *Paul entrusted them to God and to the message about God’s goodness.*

³²“Now as I leave you I ask God to protect you and to keep you believing the message *that he saves us(inc)* by doing for us what we do not deserve. *If you continue believing* the message *that I told you*, you will become *spiritually mature*, and God will give you the blessings that he has promised to give to all of those who belong to him.

³³“As for myself, I have not desired anyone’s money [MTY] or *fine* clothing. ³⁴You yourselves know that I have worked *with my hands* [MTY] to earn the money that my companions and I needed. ³⁵In everything that I did, I showed you that we(*inc*) should work hard in order *to have enough money* to give some to those who are needy. We(*inc*) should remember that our Lord Jesus himself said, ‘You are happy when people give you what you need, but God will be happy with you when you give other people what they need.’”

Acts 20:36-38

THEME: Paul prayed with them and they sadly bade him farewell.

³⁶When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of the elders and prayed. ³⁷They all cried a lot, and they hugged Paul and kissed him. ³⁸They were especially sad because he had said that they would never see him [SYN] again. Then they *all* went with him to the ship.

Acts 21:1-3

THEME: Paul, Luke and his other companions traveled from Miletus to Tyre.

21 ¹After we said good-bye to the elders from Ephesus, we got on the ship and traveled on the water to Cos Island, where the ship stopped for the night. The next day we went in the ship from Cos to Rhodes Island, where the ship stopped again. The day after that we went to Patara town, where the ship stopped. This was on Patara Island. ²At Patara we left that ship, and someone told us that there was a ship that would be going to Phoenicia region. So we got on that ship, and it left. ³We traveled over the sea until we could see Cyprus Island. We passed to the south of the island and continued sailing until we arrived at Phoenicia region, in Syria province. We arrived at Tyre city. The ship was going to stay there several days, because its workers had to unload the cargo.

Acts 21:4-6

THEME: At Tyre, believers warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem, but he went on.

⁴Someone told us where the believers in Tyre lived, so we(exc) went and stayed with them for seven days. Because God's Spirit revealed to them <that people would cause Paul to suffer/Paul would suffer> in Jerusalem, they told Paul that he should not go there. ⁵But when it was time for the ship to leave again, we prepared to continue going to Jerusalem. When we left Tyre, all the men and their wives and children went with us to the edge of the sea. We all knelt down there on the sand/shore and prayed. ⁶After we all said good-bye, Paul and we his companions got on the ship, and the other believers returned to their own homes.

Acts 21:7-9

THEME: Paul and his companions sailed from Tyre to Caesarea.

⁷After we(exc) left Tyre, we continued on that ship to Ptolemais city. There were believers there, and we greeted them and stayed with them that night. ⁸The next day we left Ptolemais and sailed to Caesarea city, where we stayed in the home of Philip, who spent his days telling others how to become disciples of Jesus. He was one of the seven men whom the believers in Jerusalem had chosen to care for the widows. ⁹He had four daughters who were not married. Each of them frequently spoke messages that the Holy Spirit had revealed to them.

Acts 21:10-14

THEME: The believers could not persuade Paul from going on to Jerusalem.

¹⁰After we(exc) had been in Philip's house for several days, a believer whose name was Agabus came down from Judea district and arrived in Caesarea. He frequently spoke messages that the Holy Spirit had told him. ¹¹Coming over to where we were, he took off Paul's belt. Then he tied his own feet and hands with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'The Jewish leaders [SYN] in Jerusalem will tie up the hands and feet of the owner of this belt, like this, and they will put him in the hands of non-Jewish people as a prisoner.'" ¹²When the rest of us heard that, we and other believers there repeatedly pled with Paul, "Please do not go up to Jerusalem!" ¹³But Paul replied, "<Please stop crying and trying to discourage me [IDM] from going!/Why are you crying and trying to discourage me [IDM] from going?> [RHQ] I am willing to be put {for people to put me} in prison and also to be killed {for them to kill me} in Jerusalem because I serve [MTY] the Lord Jesus." ¹⁴When we(exc) realized that he was determined to go to Jerusalem, we did not try any longer to persuade him not to go. We said, "May <the Lord God do what he wants/the Lord's will be done>!"

Acts 21:15-16

THEME: Paul and other believers went from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

¹⁵After those days in Caesarea, we(exc) prepared our things and left to go by land up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶Some of the believers from Caesarea also went with us. They took us to stay in the house of a man whose name was Mnason. He was from Cyprus Island, and he had believed in Jesus when people were first beginning to hear the message about him.

Acts 21:17-26

THEME: *Paul agreed with church leaders to perform a Jewish purifying ritual.*

¹⁷ When we arrived in Jerusalem, a *group* of the believers greeted us happily. ¹⁸ The next day Paul and the rest of us went to speak with James, *who was the leader of the congregation there*. All of the *other* leaders/elders of the congregation in Jerusalem were also there. ¹⁹ Paul greeted them, and then he reported all of the things that God had enabled him to do among the non-Jewish people. ²⁰ When they heard that, James and the other elders said, "Praise the Lord!" Then *one* of them said to Paul, "Brother/Friend, you(*sg*) know that there are very many thousands of us(*inc*) Jewish people *here* who have believed *in the Lord Jesus*. Also, you know that we(*inc*) all continue very carefully to obey the laws *that Moses gave us*. ²¹ *But our fellow Jewish believers* have been told {have heard *people say*} that when you are among non-Jews, you tell the Jewish believers who live there that they should stop obeying *the laws* [MTY] <of Moses/*that Moses received from God*>. *People say that you tell those Jewish believers* not to circumcise their sons and not to practice our *other* customs. *We(exc)* do not believe that this is true. ²² But our fellow Jewish believers will certainly hear that you have arrived, *and they will be angry with you*. So you need to do something [RHQ] *to show them that what they heard about you is not true*. ²³ So you should do what we suggest to you. There are four men among us who have strongly promised *to God* about something. ²⁴ Go with these men *to the Temple* and *ritually* purify yourself along with them. Then, *when it is time for them to offer the sacrifices for that ritual*, pay for what they offer as *sacrifices*. After that, they can shave their heads *to show that they have done what they promised to do*. *And when people see you in the courts of the Temple with those men*, they will know that what they have been told {what people have told them} about you is not true. Instead, all of them will know that you obey all our Jewish laws *and rituals*. ²⁵ As for the non-Jewish believers, *we elders here in Jerusalem have talked about which of our laws they should obey, and we(exc)* wrote them a *letter, telling them* what we decided. *We wrote* that they should not eat meat that people have offered as a sacrifice to any idol, *that they should not eat blood from animals* and that *they should not eat* meat from animals *that people have killed by strangling them*. *We also told them* that they should not have sex with someone to whom they are not married." ²⁶ So Paul *agreed to do what they asked*, and the next day he took the *four* men, and together they ritually purified themselves. After that, Paul went to the Temple *courts* and told *the priest* what day they would *finish* purifying themselves *ritually* and when *they* would offer *the animals as sacrifices* for each of them.

Acts 21:27-30

THEME: *Some Jews seized Paul in the Temple courts.*

²⁷⁻²⁹ When the seven days *for purifying themselves* were nearly finished, Paul *returned* to the Temple *courtyard*. Some Jews from Asia *province* saw him there, *and they were very angry at him*. On another day they had seen Paul *walking around* in Jerusalem with Trophimus, who was a non-Jew. Their laws did not permit non-Jews to be in the Temple, and they thought that Paul had brought Trophimus into the Temple *courtyard that day*. So they called out to many other Jews *who were in the Temple courtyard to help them* seize [MTY] Paul. They shouted, "Fellow Israelites, come and help *us to punish this man*! This is the one who is *constantly* teaching people wherever *he goes that they* should despise the Jewish people. *He teaches people that they should no longer obey* the laws of Moses nor respect this holy *Temple*. He has even brought non-Jews here into *the court* of our Temple, causing God to consider it no longer holy!" ³⁰ *People* throughout [MTY] the city heard that there was trouble *at the Temple courtyard*, and they came running there. They grabbed Paul and dragged him outside of the Temple *area*. The gates *to the Temple courtyard were shut* {*The Temple guards* shut the doors *to the Temple courts*} immediately, *so that the people would not riot inside the Temple area*.

Acts 21:31-32

THEME: *Roman soldiers ran to where those Jews were trying to kill Paul.*

³¹ While they were trying to kill Paul, someone *ran to the fort near the Temple* and told the Roman commander that many [HYP] people [MTY] in Jerusalem were rioting *at the Temple*. ³² The commander quickly took some officers and a *large group* of soldiers and ran *to the Temple area where the crowd was*. When the crowd of people *who were yelling and beating Paul* saw the commander and the soldiers *coming*, they stopped beating him.

Acts 21:33-40

THEME: *After the commander arrested Paul, soldiers carried him towards the fort.*

³³ The commander came to *where Paul was and* seized him. He *commanded* soldiers to fasten a chain to *each of Paul's arms*. Then he asked *the people in the crowd*, "Who is this man, and what has he done?" ³⁴ Some of the many people there were shouting one thing, *and some were shouting something else*. Because they continued shouting so loudly, the commander could not understand *what they were shouting*. So he *commanded* that Paul be taken {*the soldiers* to take Paul} into the barracks *so that he could question him there*. ³⁵ *The soldiers* led Paul to the steps of *the barracks*, but many people continued to follow them, trying to kill Paul. *So the commander told* the soldiers to carry Paul *up the steps into the barracks*. ³⁶ The crowd that followed kept shouting, "Kill him! Kill him!"

³⁷ As Paul was about to be taken {*the soldiers were about to take Paul*} into the barracks, he said *in Greek* to the commander, "May I speak to you?" The commander said, "<I am surprised that you can speak the Greek *language!*/Can

you(sg) speak the Greek *language?*» [RHQ] ³⁸ «*I thought that you(sg) were that fellow/Are you not that fellow*» from Egypt [RHQ] who wanted to rebel *against the government not long ago*, and who took four thousand violent terrorists *with him* out into the desert, *so that we could not catch him?*» ³⁹ Paul answered, “*No, I am not!* I am a Jew. I was *born* in Tarsus, which is an important [LIT] city in Cilicia *province*. I request that you(sg) let me speak to the people.” ⁴⁰ Then the commander permitted Paul *to speak*. So Paul stood on the steps and motioned with his hand *for the crowd to be quiet*. And *after* the people in the crowd became quiet, Paul spoke to them in *their own* Hebrew language [MTY].

Acts 22:1-16

THEME: Paul defended his believing in Jesus, but the Jews wanted to kill him.

22 ¹ Paul said, “*Jewish elders and my other fellow-Jews, listen to me now while I reply to those who are accusing me!*” ² When the crowd of people heard Paul speaking to them in *their own* Hebrew language, they became even more quiet and really listened. Then Paul said to them, ³ “I am a Jew, *as are all of you*. I was born in Tarsus *city*, in Cilicia *province*, but I grew up here in Jerusalem. *When I was young, for many years* I studied the laws *that Moses gave to our ancestors*. I was taught by *the famous teacher* Gamaliel [MTY] {*The famous teacher* Gamaliel taught [MTY] me}. *I have carefully obeyed those laws, because* I have wanted to obey God. I am sure that many of you also carefully obey *those laws*. ⁴ *That is why* I previously persecuted those who believe the message *that people call the Way that Jesus taught*. *I continually looked for ways to kill them. Whenever I found* men or women *who believed that message*, I *commanded* that they should be seized and thrown {*people to seize them and throw them*} into jail. ⁵ The high priest knows this, and so do the *other respected men who belong to our Jewish Council*. They gave me letters to *take* to their fellow-Jews in Damascus *city*. *By means of those letters, they authorized me to go to there and find people who believed in Jesus. They had written in the letters that I was to bring those people* as prisoners to Jerusalem, so that they would be punished here {*the leaders here could punish them*}.

So I went on my way to Damascus. ⁶ About noon, I and my companions were getting near Damascus. Suddenly a bright light from the sky flashed all around me. ⁷ *The light was so bright that* I fell to the ground. Then I heard the voice of *someone* speaking to me *from up in the sky*. *The one who was speaking to me said*, ‘Saul! Saul! Why do you(sg) do things to harm me?’ ⁸ I answered, ‘Who are you, Sir?’ He replied, ‘I am Jesus from Nazareth. I *am the one* whom you(sg) are harming *by doing things to harm my followers*.’ ⁹ The men who were *traveling* with me saw the *very bright* light, *and they heard a voice*, but they did not understand what the voice said to me. ¹⁰ Then I asked, ‘Lord, what *do you want* me to do?’ The Lord told me, ‘Get up and go into Damascus! *A man* there will tell you(sg) all that I have planned for you to do.’ ¹¹ *After that, I could not see*, because the *very bright* light had caused me to become blind. So my companions took me by the hand and led me until *we(exc) arrived* in Damascus. ¹² *A couple of days* later, a man whose name was Ananias came to see me. He was a man who *greatly respected God and carefully obeyed our Jewish laws*. All the Jews living in Damascus said good things about him. ¹³ He came and stood beside me and said to me, ‘*My friend* Saul, see *again!*’ Instantly I could see! I saw him *standing there beside me*. ¹⁴ Then he said: ‘The God whom *we(inc) worship and* whom our ancestors *worshipped* has chosen you and will show you what he wants *you to do*. *He has allowed you* to see the righteous one, *the Messiah*, and you have heard him speaking to you. ¹⁵ He wants you to tell people everywhere what you have seen and heard *from him*. ¹⁶ So now <do not delay!/why delay?> [RHQ] Stand up, let *me* baptize you, and by praying to the Lord *Jesus ask God* to forgive you(sg) for your sins!’

Acts 22:17-22

THEME: Paul told about the Lord’s commanding him to go to non-Jewish people.

¹⁷ Later, I returned to Jerusalem. *One day* I went to the Temple *courtyard*. While I was praying there, I saw a vision *in which* ¹⁸ I saw the Lord speaking to me. He said to me, ‘*Do not stay here!* Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people *here* will not <believe/listen to> what you(sg) tell *them* about me!’ ¹⁹ But I *protested and* said to him, ‘Lord, they know that I went to many of our meeting houses looking for people who believe in you. I was putting in jail those *whom I found* who believed in you, and I was even beating them. ²⁰ *They remember that* when Stephen was killed [MTY] {when people killed [MTY] Stephen} because he told people about you, I stood there *watching it all* and approving *what they were doing*. I even guarded the outer garments that those who were murdering him *had thrown aside!* *So if I stay here, the fact that I have changed how I think about you will surely impress those leaders of our people.*’ ²¹ But the Lord said to me, ‘No, *do not stay here!* Leave *Jerusalem*, because I am going to send you(sg) far away *from here* to non-Jewish people!’ ” ²² The people listened *quietly* to what Paul was saying until *he mentioned the Lord sending him to non-Jewish people*. Then they began shouting *angrily*, “Kill him! *He does not deserve to live any longer!*” *They said that because they could not believe that God would save anyone except Jews.*

Acts 22:23-29

THEME: Paul said that he was a Roman citizen, so soldiers did not flog him.

²³ While they continued shouting, “*Kill him!*” they took off their cloaks and threw dust into the air, *which showed how angry they were*. ²⁴ So the commander *commanded* that Paul be taken {*soldiers to take Paul*} into the barracks. He told *the soldiers* that they should strike Paul with a whip *that had pieces of bone/metal on the end of it*, in order to make him tell what he had done that made the Jews shout so angrily. *So the soldiers took Paul into the barracks.* ²⁵ Then they stretched

his arms out *and tied them* so that they could whip him *on his back*. But Paul said to the officer who was standing nearby *watching*, “You(sg) should think carefully about this! You will certainly be [RHQ] acting unlawfully if you whip me, a Roman citizen whom no one has put on trial and condemned!”²⁶ When the officer heard that, he went to the commander and reported it to him. He said *to the commander*, “This man is a Roman citizen! <Surely you would not *command us to whip him!* Do you really want us to whip him?> [RHQ]”²⁷ The commander *was surprised when he heard that*. He himself went *into the barracks* and said to Paul, “Tell me, are you(sg) really a Roman citizen?” Paul answered, “Yes, I am.”²⁸ Then the commander said, “I am also a Roman citizen. I paid a lot of money to become a Roman citizen.” Paul said, “But I was born a Roman citizen, so I did not need to pay anything.”²⁹ The soldiers *were about to whip Paul and to ask him questions about what he had done*. But when they heard what Paul said, they left him immediately. The commander also became afraid, because he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had *illegally commanded soldiers to tie up Paul’s hands*.

Acts 22:30

THEME: *The commander’s soldiers brought Paul to the Jewish Council.*

³⁰ The commander still wanted to know exactly why the Jews were accusing Paul. So the next day he *told the soldiers* to take the chains off Paul. He also summoned the chief priests and the *other Jewish Council members*. Then he took Paul to *where the council was meeting* and *commanded him to stand before them*.

Acts 23:1-5

THEME: *Paul apologized for unknowingly denouncing the high priest.*

23¹ Paul looked straight at the Jewish Council members and said: “My fellow-Jews, all my life I have lived respecting our God, and I do not know of anything that I have done that I knew was wrong/evil.”² When Ananias the high priest *heard what Paul said*, he commanded the men who were standing near Paul to hit him on the mouth.³ Then Paul said to Ananias, “God will punish you(sg) *for that*, you hypocrite [MET]! You sit there and judge me, using the laws that God gave Moses. But you *yourself* disobey those laws, because you commanded me to be struck *{these men to strike me} without having proved that I have done anything that is wrong!*”⁴ The men who were standing near Paul *rebuked him*. They said, “Are not you(sg) afraid to insult God’s servant, our high priest?”⁵ Paul replied, “My fellow-Jews, I am sorry that I said that. I did not know that the man *who told one of you to hit me* is the high priest. *If I had known that, I would not have insulted our high priest*, because I know that it is written *{that Moses wrote} in our Jewish law, ‘Do not speak evil of any of your rulers!’*”

Acts 23:6-10

THEME: *The commander rescued Paul from the council members.*

⁶ Paul realized that some of the *council members* were Sadducees and others were Pharisees. So, *in order to cause the Pharisees and Sadducees to argue among themselves instead of accusing him*, he called out loudly in the council hall, “My fellow-Jews, I am a Pharisee, like my father was. I have been put *{You have put me} on trial here* because I confidently expect that *some day God* will *<cause people who have died to become alive again/raise people from the dead>*.”⁷ When he said that, the Pharisees and Sadducees started to argue with one another *about whether people who have died will become alive again or not*.⁸ The Sadducees believe that after people die, they will not become alive again. They also believe that there are no angels and no *other kinds of spirits*. But the Pharisees believe *that all people who have died will one day become alive again*. They also believe that there are *angels and other kinds of spirits*.⁹ So they *<were divided/did not agree with each other>*, and they began shouting at one another *as they argued*. Some of the teachers of the laws that God gave Moses who were Pharisees stood up. *One of them* said, “We(exc) think that this man has done nothing wrong.” *Another said*, “Maybe an angel or some *other spirit really spoke to him and what he says is true*.”¹⁰ Then the *Pharisees and Sadducees* argued even more loudly *with one another*. As a result, the commander *<was afraid/thought>* that they would tear Paul to pieces. So he *commanded soldiers to go down from the barracks and forcefully take Paul away from the council members and bring him up into the barracks*. *So the soldiers did that*.

Acts 23:11

THEME: *The Lord revealed that Paul would tell people about him in Rome.*

¹¹ That night, *in a vision Paul saw the Lord Jesus come and stand near him*. The Lord said *to him*, “Be courageous! You(sg) have told people *here* in Jerusalem about me, and you must tell people in Rome *about me, too*.”

Acts 23:12-15

THEME: *Some Jews plotted to kill Paul.*

¹² The next morning *some of the Jews [MTY] who hated Paul* met secretly and talked *about how they could kill him*. They promised *themselves* that they would not eat or drink anything until they had killed him. They asked God to curse them *if they did not do what they promised*.¹³ There were more than forty men who planned to do that.¹⁴ They went to the chief

priests and Jewish elders and told them, "God has heard us promise/vow that we(exc) will not eat or drink anything until we(exc) have killed Paul. ¹⁵ So we request that you go to the commander and ask him, on behalf of the whole Jewish Council, to bring Paul down to us from the barracks. Tell the commander that you want to question Paul some more. But we(exc) will be waiting to kill Paul while he is on the way here."

Acts 23:16-22

THEME: Paul's nephew warned that some Jews had plotted to kill Paul.

¹⁶ But the son of Paul's sister heard what they were planning to do, so he went into the barracks and told Paul. ¹⁷ When Paul heard that, he called one of the officers and said to him, "Please take this young man to the commander, because he needs to tell him something important." ¹⁸ So the officer took Paul's nephew to the commander. The officer said to the commander, "That prisoner, Paul, called me and said, 'Please take this young man to the commander, because he needs to tell him something important.'" ¹⁹ The commander took the young man by the hand, led him off by himself, and asked him, "What do you(sg) need to tell me?" ²⁰ He said, "There are some [SYN] Jews who have planned to ask you(sg) to bring Paul before their council tomorrow. They will say that they want to ask him some more questions. But that is not true. ²¹ Do not do what they ask you(sg) to do, because there are more than forty Jewish men who will be hiding and waiting to attack Paul when he passes by on the way to the council. They even promised/vowed to God that they will not eat or drink anything until they have killed Paul. They are ready to do it, and right now they are waiting for you(sg) to agree to do what they are asking you to do." ²² The commander said to Paul's young nephew, "Do not tell anyone that you(sg) have told me about their plan." Then he sent the young man away.

Acts 23:23-35

THEME: Many soldiers escorted Paul safely to Governor Felix at Caesarea.

²³ Then the commander called two of his officers and told them, "Get a group of two hundred soldiers ready to travel. Take along seventy soldiers riding horses, and two hundred other soldiers carrying spears. All of you must be ready to leave at nine o'clock tonight, to go down to Caesarea city. ²⁴ And take along horses for Paul and those accompanying him to ride, and safely escort him to the palace of Governor Felix." ²⁵ Then the commander wrote a letter to send to the governor. This is what he wrote: ²⁶ "I am Claudius Lysias writing to you. You, Felix, are our governor whom we(exc) respect, and I sincerely send you my greetings. ²⁷ I have sent you(sg) this man, Paul, because certain Jews seized him and were about to kill him. But I heard someone tell me that he is a Roman citizen, so I and my soldiers went and rescued him. ²⁸ I wanted to know what those Jews were saying that he had done wrong, so I took him to their Jewish Council. ²⁹ I listened while they asked this man questions and he answered them. The things they accused him about were entirely concerned with their Jewish laws. But Paul has not disobeyed any of our Roman laws. So our officials should not execute him or even put him in prison [MTY]. ³⁰ Someone told me that some [SYN] Jews were secretly planning to kill this man, so I immediately sent him to you, so that you(sg) may give him a fair trial there. I have also commanded the Jews who have accused him to go there to Caesarea and tell you(sg) what they are accusing him about."

³¹ So the soldiers did what the commander commanded them, taking this letter with them. They got Paul and took him with them during the night down to Antipatris city. ³² The next day, the foot soldiers returned to the barracks in Jerusalem and the soldiers who rode horses went on with Paul. ³³ When the men escorting Paul arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor, and they delivered Paul to the governor. Then the horsemen returned to Jerusalem. ³⁴ The governor read the letter and then he said to Paul, "What province are you(sg) from?" Paul answered, "I am from Cilicia province." ³⁵ Then the governor said, "When the people who have accused you(sg) arrive, I will listen to what each of you says and then I will judge your case." Then he commanded that Paul be guarded {soldiers to guard Paul} in the palace that King Herod the Great had built.

Acts 24:1-9

THEME: Paul defended himself, and Felix promised to judge him.

24 ¹ Five days later Ananias the high priest, having heard that Paul was now in Caesarea, went down there from Jerusalem, along with some other Jewish elders and a lawyer whose name was Tertullus. There they formally told the governor what Paul had done that they considered wrong. ² The governor commanded Paul to be brought {a soldier to bring Paul} in. When Paul arrived, Tertullus began to accuse him. He said to the governor, "Honorable Governor Felix, during the many years that you(sg) have ruled us, we(exc) have lived well/peacefully. By planning wisely, you have improved many things in this province. ³ Therefore, sir, we(exc) always gratefully acknowledge everything that you have done for all of us, wherever you have done those things. ⁴ But, so that I will not take up too much of your time, I earnestly request that you kindly listen to me very briefly. ⁵ We(exc) have observed that this man, wherever he goes, causes trouble. Specifically, he causes all the Jews everywhere [HYP] to riot. Also, he leads the entire group whom people call 'the followers of the Nazarene', a false sect. ⁶ He even tried to do things in the Temple in Jerusalem that would <defile it/make it unholy>. So we(exc) seized him. ⁷ But Lysias, the commander at the Roman fort, came with his soldiers and forcefully

^d Some Greek manuscripts include the sentence: "We would have judged him according to our Jewish law."

took him away from us [SYN]. ⁸Lysias also commanded Paul's accusers to come here and accuse Paul before you. If you question him yourself, you will be able to learn that all these things about which we are accusing him are true." ⁹When the Jewish leaders who were listening heard that, they told the governor that what Tertullus had said was true.

Acts 24:10-21

THEME: Paul disproved what they had said, but admitted that he was a Christian.

¹⁰Then the governor motioned with *his hand to Paul* that he should speak. So Paul replied. He said, "Governor Felix, I know that you(sg) have judged this Jewish province for many years. Therefore I gladly defend myself, confident that you will listen to me and will judge me fairly. ¹¹You(sg) can easily ascertain that <it has not been more than twelve days since/only twelve days ago> I went up to Jerusalem to worship God. *That is not enough time to cause a lot of trouble.* ¹²No one can claim legitimately that they saw me arguing with anyone at the Temple courts because I did not do that. No one can claim legitimately that they saw me causing people to riot in any Jewish meeting place, or causing trouble anywhere else in Jerusalem city, because I did not do that. ¹³So they cannot prove to you the things about which they are now accusing me. ¹⁴But I admit to you(sg) that this is true: I do worship the God that our ancestors worshipped. *It is true that I follow the way that Jesus taught us.* The Jewish leaders call that a false religion/teaching. I also believe everything that was written by Moses {that Moses wrote} in the laws that God gave him and everything that was written by the other prophets {that the other prophets wrote} in their books [MTY]. ¹⁵I confidently expect, just like some of these men also expect, that some day God will cause everyone who has died to become alive again. He will <cause to become alive again/raise from the dead> both those who were righteous and those who were wicked. ¹⁶Because I am confidently waiting for that day, I always try to do what pleases God and what other people think is right. ¹⁷After I had been in other places for several years, I returned to Jerusalem. I went there to deliver some money to my fellow Jews who are poor, and to offer sacrifices to God. ¹⁸Some Jews saw me in the temple courts after I had completed the ritual by which a person is made {that makes a person} pure. There was no crowd with me, and I was not causing people to riot. ¹⁹But it was some other Jews who had come from Asia province who really caused people to riot. They should be here in front of you(sg) to accuse me, if they thought that I did something wrong. ²⁰But if they do not want to do that (OR, *But because they are not here*), these Jewish men who are here should tell you(sg) what they think I did that was wrong, when I defended myself before their council. ²¹They might say that one thing that I shouted as I stood before them was wrong. *What I said was, 'You are judging me today because I believe that God will <cause all people who have died to become alive again/raise all people from the dead>.'*"

Acts 24:22-23

THEME: Governor Felix adjourned the trial.

²²Felix already knew quite a lot about what people called 'the way of Jesus'. But he did not let Paul or his accusers continue to speak. *Instead*, he said to them, "Later, when Commander Lysias comes down here, I will decide these matters that concern you all." ²³Then he told the officer who was guarding Paul to take Paul back to the prison and make sure that Paul was guarded all the time. But he said that Paul was not to be chained {that the officer was not to fasten chains on him}, and if his friends came to visit him, the officer should allow them to help Paul in any way that they wished.

Acts 24:24-27

THEME: Felix often talked to Paul, hoping that Paul would give him money.

²⁴Several days later Felix and his wife Drusilla, who was a Jew, came back to Caesarea after having been away for a few days. Felix commanded Paul to be brought in {a soldier to bring Paul in}. Then Felix listened to what Paul said to him. Paul spoke about what Christians believe about the Messiah Jesus. ²⁵Paul explained to them about what God requires people to do in order to please him. *He also explained about God requiring people to control how they act. Paul also told him that there will be a time when God will judge people.* Felix became alarmed after hearing those things. So he said to Paul, "That is all I want to hear now. When there is a time that is convenient I will ask you(sg) to come to me again." ²⁶Felix said that because he hoped that Paul would give him some money for allowing Paul to get out of prison. So he repeatedly sent for Paul to come, and Paul repeatedly went and talked with him. *But he did not give Felix any money, and Felix did not command his soldiers to release Paul from prison.*

²⁷Felix let Paul remain in prison, because he wanted to please the Jewish leaders and he knew that they did not want him to release Paul. But when two years had passed, Porcius Festus became governor in place of Felix.

Acts 25:1-5

THEME: Festus told the Jews to go and accuse Paul at Caesarea.

25 ¹Festus, who was now the governor of the province, arrived in Caesarea, and three days later he went up to Jerusalem. ²In Jerusalem, the chief priests and other Jewish leaders formally told Festus about the things that they said that Paul had done that were wrong. ³They urgently asked Festus to do something for them. *They asked him to command soldiers to bring Paul to Jerusalem, so that Festus could put him on trial there.* But they were planning that some of them

would hide *near the road* and wait *for Paul* and kill him when he was traveling *to Jerusalem*.⁴ But Festus replied, “Paul is in Caesarea, and is being guarded {soldiers are guarding him} *there*. I myself will go down to Caesarea in a few days.⁵ Choose some of your leaders to go there with me. *While they are there*, they can accuse Paul of the wrong things that you say that he has done.”

Acts 25:6-12

THEME: *Paul appealed to Caesar, so Festus agreed to that.*

⁶ After Festus had been *in Jerusalem* eight or ten days, he went back down to Caesarea. *Several of the Jewish leaders also went there*. The next day Festus *commanded* that Paul be brought {someone to bring Paul} to him *in the assembly hall* so that he could judge him.⁷ After Paul was brought to *the assembly hall*, the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem gathered around him to *accuse him*. They told Festus that Paul had committed many crimes. But they could not prove *that Paul had done the things about which they accused him*.⁸ Then Paul spoke to defend himself. He said, “I have done nothing wrong against the laws of us(exc) Jews, and I have not disobeyed the rules concerning our Temple. I have also done nothing wrong against your government [MTY].”⁹ But Festus wanted to please the Jewish leaders, so he asked Paul, “Are you(sg) willing to go up to Jerusalem so that I can listen as these men accuse you *there*?”¹⁰ But Paul *did not want to do that*. So he said to Festus, “No, I am not willing to go to Jerusalem! I am now standing before you, and you(sg) are the judge *whom the Roman Emperor [MTY] has authorized*. This is the place where I should be judged {where you should judge me}. I have not wronged the Jewish people *at all*, as you know very well.¹¹ If I had done something bad *for which I should be executed {concerning which the law said that they should execute me}*, I would not plead *with them that they not kill me*. But none of these things about which they accuse me is *true*, so no one can *legally* surrender me to *these Jews*. So I formally request that the emperor [MTY] *should judge me at Rome*.”¹² Then after Festus conferred with the *men who regularly* advised him, he replied to Paul, “You(sg) have formally requested *that I should send you to the emperor in Rome*. So I will arrange for you to go there *in order that he can judge you*.”

Acts 25:13-22

THEME: *Festus told King Agrippa about Paul.*

¹³ After several days, King Herod Agrippa arrived at Caesarea, along with *his younger sister* Bernice. They had come to *formally* welcome Festus *as the new Governor of the province*.¹⁴ King Agrippa and Bernice stayed many days in Caesarea. While they were there, Festus told Agrippa about Paul. He said to the king, “There is a man here whom Felix kept in prison *while he was governor*. He left him *there when his time as governor ended*.¹⁵ When I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and *the other Jewish elders* told me that this man had done many things *against their laws*. They asked me to condemn him *to be executed* {judge him so that people could kill him}.¹⁶ But I told them that when someone has been accused of a crime, we Romans do not immediately <condemn that person/declare that person to be guilty>. First, we *command* him to stand before the people who are accusing him and to say whether or not he has done those things. *After that, the judge will decide what to do with him*.¹⁷ So those Jews came *here to Caesarea* when I came. I did not delay. The day after *we(exc) arrived*, after I sat down at the place where I make decisions, I *commanded* that Paul be brought {soldiers to bring Paul} into *the court room*.¹⁸ The Jewish leaders did accuse him, but the things about which they accused him were not any of the *evil crimes* about which I thought *they would accuse him*.¹⁹ Instead, what they argued about with him were some teachings that *some Jews believe and others do not believe*. They argued about a man whose name was Jesus who had died, *but the man they were accusing, whose name is Paul*, kept saying, ‘Jesus is alive again.’²⁰ I did not know what questions to ask *them, and I did not know how to judge* concerning their dispute. So I asked Paul, ‘Are you(sg) willing to go *back to Jerusalem* and have the dispute *between you and these Jews* judged there {and let me judge there the dispute *between you and these Jews*}?’²¹ But Paul answered, ‘No. I am not willing to go to Jerusalem! I want you(sg) to request that the emperor *in Rome* judge my affair, and I will wait here as a prisoner until then.’ So I have *commanded* that Paul be guarded {soldiers to guard Paul} here until I can send him to the emperor [MTY] *in Rome*.”²² Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I myself would like to hear what that man says.” Festus answered, “I will arrange for you(sg) to hear him tomorrow.”

Acts 25:23-27

THEME: *Festus asked King Agrippa to tell him what to write to Caesar about Paul.*

²³ The next day Agrippa and Bernice came very ceremoniously to the assembly hall. Some *Roman* commanders and prominent men in *Caesarea* came with them. Then, Festus told an officer to bring Paul. So after the officer *went to the prison and* brought him,²⁴ Festus said, “King Agrippa, and all *the rest of you* who are here, you see this man. Many [HYP] Jews in Jerusalem and also those here *in Caesarea* appealed to me, screaming that *we(exc)* should not let him live any longer.²⁵ But when I asked them to tell me *what he had done, and they told me*, I found out that he had not done anything for which he should be executed {*anyone should execute him*}. However, he has asked that our emperor *should judge his case*, so I have decided to send him to Rome.²⁶ But I do not know what specifically I should write to the emperor concerning him. That is why I have brought him here. I want you all to *hear him speak*, and I especially want you(sg), King Agrippa, to hear him. Then, after *we(inc)* have questioned him, I may know what I should write *to the emperor about him*.²⁷ It seems to me *that it would be* unreasonable to send a prisoner *to the emperor in Rome* without my specifying the things about which people are accusing him.”

Acts 26:1-3

THEME: Paul requested that his hearers would listen to him.

26 ¹Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You(sg) are permitted *now* to speak to *defend* yourself.” Paul stretched out his hand < *dramatically/to salute the king* > and began to defend himself. He said, ²“King Agrippa, I consider that I am fortunate that today, while you(sg) listen, I can defend myself from all the things about which the Jewish *leaders* [SYN] are accusing me. ³I am really fortunate, because you(sg) know all about the customs of us Jews and the questions that we(exc) argue about. So I ask you, please listen patiently to what I say.

Acts 26:4-8

THEME: Paul told about being a Pharisee who believed that God would resurrect people.

⁴“Many [HYP] of my fellow Jews know about how I have conducted my life, from the time I was a child. They know how I lived in the area where I was *born* and *also later* in Jerusalem. ⁵They have known for many years, and they could tell you, if they wanted to, that *since I was very young* I obeyed the customs of our religion very carefully, just like the *other* Pharisees do. ⁶Today I am being put on trial {*they are putting me on trial*} because I am confidently expecting that God will do what he promised our(exc) ancestors. ⁷Our twelve tribes are *also* confidently waiting for God to do *for us what he promised*, as they respectfully worship him, day and night. *Respected* king, I confidently expect *that God will do what he promised, and they also believe that!* *But that is the reason* that these Jewish leaders [SYN] are accusing me! ⁸You *people* believe that God can cause those who have died to become alive again, so < *why do you refuse to believe that he raised Jesus from the dead?/you should not refuse to believe that he raised Jesus from the dead!* > [RHQ]

Acts 26:9-11

THEME: Paul told about how he had persecuted Christians.

⁹“Formerly I, too, was sure that I should do everything that I could to oppose Jesus [MTY], the man from Nazareth town. ¹⁰So that is what I did *when I lived* in Jerusalem. I put many of the believers in jail, as the chief priests there had authorized me to do. *When the Jewish leaders wanted* those Christians killed {*someone to kill those Christians*}. I voted *for that*. ¹¹Many times I punished the believers *whom I found* in Jewish meeting places. *By punishing them*, I tried to force them to speak evil *about Jesus*. I was so angry with the followers of Jesus that I even traveled to other cities to *find them and* do things to harm them.

Acts 26:12-18

THEME: Paul told how he had become a believer in Jesus.

¹²“*One day*, I was on my way to Damascus *city* to do that. The chief priests *in Jerusalem* had authorized and sent me to *seize the believers there*. ¹³*My respected* king, *while I was going* along the road, at about noon I saw a *bright* light in the sky. It was even brighter than the sun! It shone all around me, and also around the men who were traveling with me. ¹⁴We(exc) all fell to the ground. Then I heard the voice of someone speaking to me in my own Hebrew language [MTY]. He said ‘Saul, Saul, < *stop causing me to suffer!/why are you causing me to suffer?* > [RHQ]’ You(sg) are *hurting yourself by trying to hurt me*, [MET] *like an ox kicking against its owner’s goad*.’ ¹⁵Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The Lord said to me, ‘I am Jesus. You(sg) are harming me *by harming my followers*.’ ¹⁶But *instead of continuing to do that*, stand up now! I have appeared to you(sg) to tell you that I have chosen you to serve me. You must tell people about *what I am showing you* as you are seeing me *now*, and about what I *will show you when* I will *later* appear to you. ¹⁷I will protect you *from those who will try to harm you, both your own people and also those who are not Jewish*. I am sending you to them ¹⁸to help them to realize [MTY] what is true and to stop believing what is false [MET]. I am sending you to them so that they may let God control them and not let Satan control them any more. *Then God* will forgive their sins and will accept them as his people because they believe in me.’ *That is what Jesus said to me*.

Acts 26:19-20

THEME: Paul said that he obeyed what Jesus commanded him from heaven.

¹⁹“So, King Agrippa, I fully obeyed [LIT] what *the Lord Jesus told me to do when he spoke to me* from heaven. ²⁰First, I preached to *the Jews* in Damascus. Then I *preached to the Jews* in Jerusalem and throughout *the rest of Judea province*. After that, I also preached to non-Jews. I preached that they must turn away from their sinful behavior and turn their lives over to God. I told them that they must do things that would show that they had truly stopped their sinful behavior.

Acts 26:21-23

THEME: Paul said that he proclaimed what the prophets had written about the Messiah.

²¹“It is because I *preached* this message *that some* [SYN] Jews seized me *when I was* in the Temple *courtyard* and tried to kill me. ²²However, God has been helping me *from that time, and he is still helping me* today. So I stand here and I tell *all*

of you people, those who are important and those who are not, *who Jesus is*. Everything that I say *about him* is what Moses and the *other* prophets wrote *about long ago, things that they said* would happen. ²³They wrote that *people would cause* the Messiah to suffer and die. They also wrote that he would be the first person to become alive again, to proclaim *the message that would be like light, that he would save both his own Jewish people and non-Jewish people.*"

Acts 26:24-29

THEME: *Paul talked to Festus and Agrippa, urging them to become believers in Jesus.*

²⁴ Before Paul could say anything *further* to defend himself, Festus shouted: "Paul, you are crazy! You have studied too much, and it has made you insane!" ²⁵ But Paul answered, "Your Excellency, Festus, I am not raving *insanely!* On the contrary, what I am saying is true and sensible!" ²⁶ King Agrippa knows the things *that I have been talking about*, and I can speak confidently to him *about them*. I am sure that he knows [LIT] these things, because people everywhere [IDM] have heard [LIT] about what happened to *Jesus*." ²⁷ Then Paul asked, "King Agrippa, do you believe *what the prophets wrote?* I know that you (sg) believe it." ²⁸ Then Agrippa *answered* Paul, "*<I hope that you (sg) do not think that by the few things that you have just now said you can persuade me to become a Christian!/You do not think, do you, that by the few things that you have just now said you can persuade me to become a Christian?>*" [RHQ] ²⁹ Paul replied, "Whether it takes a short time or a long time, it does not matter. I pray to God that you and also all of the others who are listening to me today will also *believe in Jesus* like I do, but I do not want you to become prisoners [MTY] *like I am.*"

Acts 26:30-32

THEME: *The officials said that Paul was innocent but must go to Rome.*

³⁰ Then the king, the governor, Bernice, and all the others got up ³¹ and left *the room*. *While* they were talking to one another they said to each other, "There is no reason why *<the authorities/we>* should execute this man, or that he should even be kept in prison [MTY]." ³² Agrippa said to Festus, "If this man had not asked that the Emperor judge him, he could have been released {*we(inc)* could have released him}."

Acts 27:1-8

THEME: *Paul and other prisoners sailed from Caesarea to Crete.*

27 ¹ When *the Governor and those who advised him* decided that it was time for us (exc) to get on a ship and go to Italy, they put Paul and some other prisoners into the hands/care of an army captain whose name was Julius. *He was the one who would guard us on the journey*. Julius was an officer in charge of a *group of a hundred soldiers that people called* 'the Emperor Augustus Group.' ² So we got on a ship that had come from Adramyttium city in Asia province. *The ship was going to return there, stopping at cities along the coast of Asia province*. Aristarchus, a fellow believer who was from Thessalonica city in Macedonia province, went with us. ³ The day after *the ship sailed*, we arrived at Sidon city. Julius kindly told Paul that he could go and see his friends *who lived there*, so that they could give him whatever he might need. *So Paul visited the believers there*. ⁴ Then the ship left Sidon, but the winds were blowing against us (exc), so *the ship went along the north side of Cyprus Island, the side that is sheltered from the wind*. ⁵ After that, we crossed over the sea close to the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia provinces. *The ship arrived at Myra city, which is in Lycia province. We got off the ship there*. ⁶ In Myra, people told Julius that a ship was there *that had come from Alexandria city and would soon sail to Italy*. So he arranged for us to get on *that ship, and we left*. ⁷ We sailed slowly for several days and finally arrived close to the coast of Asia province, near Cnidus town. *After that, the wind was very strong and did not allow the ship to move straight ahead westward. So instead, we sailed southward along the side of Crete Island that is sheltered from the wind, and we passed near Cape Salmone*. ⁸ *The wind was still strong, and it prevented the ship from moving ahead fast*. So we moved slowly along the coast of Crete, and we arrived at a harbor that was called Fair Havens, near Lasea town.

Acts 27:9-20

THEME: *Paul warned them not to travel on, but the ship's officials decided to go on anyway.*

⁹ Much time had passed, so it would have been dangerous if we (exc) had traveled *farther* by ship *because after that time of the year* [MTY] *the sea often became very stormy*. So Paul said to the men *on the ship*, ¹⁰ "Men, I perceive that *if we(inc) travel by ship* now, it will be disastrous for us. A storm may destroy the ship and the cargo, and possibly we will drown." ¹¹ But the officer *did not listen to* what Paul said. Instead, he decided to do what the pilot *of the ship* and the owner of the ship advised. ¹² The harbor where the ship had stopped was not a good place to remain during the winter *when the weather frequently becomes stormy*. *So most of the people on the ship decided that we(inc) should leave there, because they hoped that we could stay at Phoenix port during the winter, if we could possibly arrive there*. That harbor was open to the sea in two directions, *but the strong winds did not blow there*. ¹³ Then a gentle wind began to blow *from the south*, and the crew members thought that they could travel as they had decided to do. *So they lifted the anchor up out of the sea, and the ship sailed westward along the southern shore of Crete Island*. ¹⁴ But after a while, a wind that was very strong blew across the island *from the north side and hit the ship. That wind was called* {People called that wind} "the Northeast Wind." It blew strongly against the *front* of the ship. The result was that we could not keep going in the direction *in which we had been going*. So the sailors let the wind move the ship in the direction *that the wind* was blowing. ¹⁶ The ship then passed a small

island named Cauda. We passed along the side of the island that sheltered the ship from the wind. Then while the ship was moving along, the sailors lifted the lifeboat up out of the water and tied it on the deck. But the strong wind made it difficult even to do that. ¹⁷ After the sailors hoisted/lifted the lifeboat onto the ship, they tied ropes around the ship's hull to strengthen the ship. The sailors were afraid that, because the wind was pushing the ship, it might run onto the sandbanks off the coast of Libya to the south and get stuck there. So they lowered the largest sail so that the ship would move slower. Even so, the wind continued to move the ship along. The wind and the waves continued to toss the ship about roughly, so on the next day the sailors began to throw overboard the things that the ship was carrying. ¹⁹ On the third day after the stormy wind had begun to blow, the sailors/we [MTY] threw overboard most of the sails, ropes, and poles, in order to make the ship lighter. ²⁰ The wind continued to blow very strongly, and the sky was full of dark clouds day and night. We could not see the sun or the stars for many days, so we could not determine where we were. And the wind continued to blow violently. So we(exc) finally thought that we would drown in the sea.

Acts 27:21-26

THEME: Paul told them that an angel from God said that they would all survive.

²¹ None of us on the ship had eaten for many days. Then one day, Paul stood up in front of us and said, "Friends, you should have listened to me when I said that we(inc) should not sail from Crete. Then we would have been safe, and the ship and its cargo would be in good condition [LIT]. ²² But now, I urge you, do not be afraid, because none of us will die. The storm will destroy the ship but not us. ²³ I know this, because last night God, the one to whom I belong and whom I serve, sent an angel who came and stood by me. ²⁴ The angel said to me, 'Paul, do not be afraid! You(sg) must go to Rome and stand before the Emperor there so that he can judge you. I want you to know that God has granted to you that all those who are traveling by ship with you will also survive.' ²⁵ So cheer up, my friends, because I believe that God will make this happen, exactly as the angel told me. ²⁶ However, the ship will crash on some island, and we(inc) will go ashore there."

Acts 27:27-32

THEME: Paul thwarted some sailors who tried to sneak ashore in the lifeboat.

²⁷ On the fourteenth night after the storm had begun, the ship was still being blown {the wind was still blowing the ship} across the Adriatic sea. About midnight, the sailors sensed that the ship was getting close to land. ²⁸ So they lowered a rope to measure how deep the water was. When they pulled the rope up again, they measured it and saw that the water was <120 feet/37 meters> deep. They went a little farther and lowered the rope again. That time, they saw that the water was only about <90 feet/28 meters> deep. ²⁹ They were afraid that the ship might go onto some rocks, so they threw out four anchors from the ship's stern/back and continued to wish/pray that it would soon be dawn so that they could see where the ship was going. ³⁰ Some of the sailors were planning to escape from the ship, so they lowered the lifeboat into the sea. In order that no one would know what they planned to do, they pretended that they wanted to lower some anchors from the ship's front/bow. ³¹ But Paul said to the army officer and soldiers, "If the sailors do not stay in the ship, you have no hope of being saved." ³² So the soldiers cut the ropes and let the lifeboat fall into the water.

Acts 27:33-38

THEME: Paul urged them to eat some food, so they did and then lightened the ship.

³³ Just before dawn, Paul urged everyone on the ship to eat some food. He said, "For the past fourteen days you have been waiting and watching and not eating anything. ³⁴ So, now I urge you to eat some food. We(inc) need to do that in order to stay alive. I tell you to do that because I know that none of you will drown [IDM]." ³⁵ After Paul had said that, while everyone was watching, he took some bread and thanked God for it. Then he broke the bread and began to eat some of it. ³⁶ The rest of us became encouraged, so we(exc) all ate some food. ³⁷ Altogether there were 276 of us [SYN] on the ship. ³⁸ When everyone had eaten as much as they wanted, they threw the grain that the ship was carrying into the sea, and this made the ship lighter.

Acts 27:39-41

THEME: The waves began to break up the ship after it struck a shoal.

³⁹ At dawn, we(exc) could see land, but the sailors did not recognize the place. However, they could see that there was a bay and a wide area of sand at the water's edge. They planned that, if it was possible, they would steer the ship onto the beach. ⁴⁰ So some of the sailors cut the anchor ropes and let the anchors fall into the sea. At the same time, other sailors untied the ropes that fastened the rudders, so that they could steer the ship again. Then the sailors raised the sail at the front/bow of the ship so that the wind would blow the ship forward, and the ship headed towards the shore. ⁴¹ But the ship hit a sandbank. The front of the ship stuck there and could not move, and big waves beat against the back of the ship and it began to break apart.

Acts 27:42-44

THEME: *The officer saved Paul and commanded all to go to the shore, so they did that.*

⁴²The soldiers said to one another, "Let's kill all the prisoners on the ship, so that they will not be able to swim away and escape." They planned to do that because they were sure that officials would order them to be executed if they let the prisoners escape. ⁴³But Julius, the army captain, wanted to save Paul, so he stopped the soldiers from doing what they planned to do. Instead, he commanded first that everyone who could swim should jump into the water and swim to land. ⁴⁴Then he told the others to hold on to planks or pieces from the ship and go towards shore. We(exc) did what he said, and in that way all of us arrived safely on land.

Acts 28:1-6

THEME: *The Maltese thought that Paul was a god because a snake did not harm him.*

28 ¹After we(exc) had arrived safely on the shore, we learned that it was an island called Malta. ²The people who lived there received us kindly. They lit a fire and invited us to come and warm ourselves, because it was raining and it was cold. ³Paul gathered some sticks and put them on the fire. But a snake came out from the fire to escape from the heat, and fastened itself on Paul's hand. ⁴The islanders knew that the snake was poisonous, so when they saw it hanging from Paul's hand, they said to each other, "Probably this man has murdered someone. Although he has escaped from being drowned, the god <who pays people back/who punishes people> for their [MTY] sins will cause him to die." ⁵But Paul simply shook the snake off into the fire, and nothing happened to him. ⁶The people were expecting that Paul's body would soon swell up or that he would suddenly fall down and die. But after they had waited a long time, they saw that the snake had not harmed him at all. So then the people changed what they were thinking and said to one another, "This man is not a murderer! Probably he is a god!"

Acts 28:7-10

THEME: *Paul healed many Maltese, so they supplied what he and the others needed.*

⁷Near where the people had made the fire, there were some fields that belonged to a man whose name was Publius. He was the chief official on the island. He invited us to come and stay in his home. He took care of us for three days. ⁸At that time Publius' father had fever and dysentery, and he was lying in bed. So Paul visited him and prayed for him. Then Paul placed his hands on him and healed him. ⁹After Paul had done that, the other people on the island who were sick came to him and he healed them, too. ¹⁰They brought us gifts and showed in other ways that they greatly respected us. When we were ready to leave three months later, they brought us food and other things that we would need on the ship.

Acts 28:11-14

THEME: *Paul and the others sailed to Puteoli, then went by land towards Rome.*

¹¹After we had stayed there three months, we got on a ship that was going to Italy and sailed away. The ship had been in a harbor on the island during the months when there are many storms. It had come from Alexandria city. On the front of the ship there were carved images of the twin gods whose names were Castor and Pollux. ¹²We sailed from the island and arrived at Syracuse city on Sicily island and stayed there three days. ¹³Then we traveled on by ship and arrived at Rhegium port in Italy. The next day, the wind was blowing from behind us, so we sailed along fast. The day after that, we reached Puteoli town, where we left the ship. ¹⁴In Puteoli we met some believers who invited us to stay with them for a week. After visiting them, we left there and started to travel by land to Rome.

Acts 28:15-16

THEME: *Christians came out from Rome and escorted Paul into that city.*

¹⁵A group of believers who lived in Rome had heard that we(exc) were coming. So they came out from Rome to meet us. Some of them met us at the town called 'The Market on Appian Road,' and others met us at the town called 'The Three Inns.' When Paul saw those believers, he thanked God and was encouraged. ¹⁶After we(exc) arrived in Rome, Paul was permitted {a Roman official who was responsible for guarding Paul permitted Paul} to live in a house by himself. But there was always a soldier there to guard him.

Acts 28:17-22

THEME: *The Jewish leaders asked Paul to tell them about Christianity.*

¹⁷After Paul had been there three days, he sent a message to the Jewish leaders to come and talk with him. So they came, and Paul said to them, "My fellow Jews, although I have not opposed our people nor spoken against the customs of our ancestors, our leaders in Jerusalem seized [MTY] me. But before they could kill me, a Roman commander rescued me and later sent me to Caesarea for Roman authorities/officials to put me on trial. ¹⁸The Roman authorities/officials questioned me and wanted to release me, because I had not done any bad thing for which I should be executed {they should kill me}.

¹⁹ But when the Jewish *leaders* [SYN] there opposed *what the Roman authorities wanted to do*, I had to formally request that the Emperor *judge me here in Rome*. But my reason for doing that was not that I wanted to accuse our leaders about anything. ²⁰ So I have requested you *to come* here so that I can tell you *why I am a prisoner*. It is because I believe in [MTY] our Messiah, the one *God long ago promised to send to us(inc) Jews*.²¹ Then *the Jewish leaders* said, “We(*exc*) have not received any letters from *our fellow Jews* in Judea about you. Also, none of our fellow Jews who have arrived *here from Judea* has said anything bad about you. ²² But we(*exc*) want to hear what you(*sg*) think about this *Christian sect/group*, because we know that in many places [HYP] bad things are being said {people are saying bad things} about it.”

Acts 28:23-31

THEME: *Paul told the Jews that non-Jews would believe the gospel.*

²³ So they *talked with Paul and decided that they would come back on another day to hear him*. When that day arrived, those Jews came back to the place where Paul was staying, and they brought more Jews with them. Paul talked to them from morning until evening. He talked to them about how God wants to rule *people's lives* [MET]. He tried to convince them that Jesus *is the Messiah* by reminding them what Moses and the other prophets had written [MTY]. ²⁴ Some of those Jews believed that what was said *by Paul* {what Paul said} about Jesus *was true*, but others did not believe *that it was true*. ²⁵ So they began to argue with one another. *Paul realized that some of them did not want to listen to him*, so when they were about to leave, he said, “The Holy Spirit said something to your/our(*incl*) ancestors. He spoke these words to Isaiah the prophet, *and what he said is also true about you*,

²⁶ Go to your fellow Israelites and tell them,

“You repeatedly listen and listen *to the message of God*, but you never understand *what God is saying*.

You repeatedly look at and see *the things that God is doing*,

but you never understand *what they mean*.

²⁷ *God also said to the prophet*,

These people do not understand, because they have become stubborn.

They have ears, but they do not understand what they hear,
and they have closed their eyes *because they do not want to see*.

If they wanted to obey what I say to them,

they might understand with their hearts what they see *me doing* and what they hear *me saying*.

Then they might turn from their sinful behavior and I would save them.

²⁸ *That is what God said to the prophet Isaiah about our ancestors. But you Jews today do not want to believe God's message*. Therefore, I am telling you that God has sent to the non-Jews this message about how he saves people, and they will listen *and accept it!*^e

³⁰ For two whole years Paul stayed *there* in a house that he rented. Many people came to see him, and he received them all gladly *and talked with them*. ³¹ He preached *and taught people* about how God could rule *their lives* [MET] and taught them about the Lord Jesus Christ. He did that without being afraid, and no one tried to stop him.

^e Some Greek manuscripts add verse 29, “After Paul said that, the Jewish leaders left, still arguing strongly among themselves.”

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Christians at Rome. We call this letter Romans

Romans 1:1-7

***THEME:** I, Paul, an apostle whom God appointed to proclaim the good message about Jesus Christ, am writing this letter to all you believers who are in Rome. I pray that God will continue to act kindly toward you and grant you peace.*

1 ¹ I, Paul, who serve Christ Jesus, am writing this letter. God chose me to be an apostle, and I was appointed by him {he appointed me} in order that I should proclaim <the good message/the gospel> that comes from him. ² Long before Jesus came to earth, God promised that he would reveal this good message by means of what his prophets wrote in the sacred Scriptures. ³ This good message is about the one whom we know as his Son. As to his Son's physical/human nature, he was born a descendant of King David. ⁴ As to his divine nature, it was shown {God showed} powerfully that he is <God's own Son/God who became human>. God showed this by his Holy Spirit causing him to become alive again after he died. He is Jesus Christ our Lord. ⁵ He is the one who appointed me to be an apostle, which I did not deserve. He did that in order that many among the non-Jews would honor him and would obey him as a result of their believing my message about him. ⁶ You believers who are living in Rome city are also among those whom God has chosen to belong to Jesus Christ. ⁷ I am writing this letter to all of you whom God loves and whom he has chosen to become his people. I pray that God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord will continue to act kindly toward you and will continue to cause you to have inner peace.

Romans 1:8-15

***THEME:** I thank God that people everywhere are talking about how you believers in Rome are trusting Jesus Christ. I pray that God will permit me to visit you soon. I want you to know that I have longed to visit you, but things have always prevented me. I am eager to proclaim the good message to you who are living at Rome also.*

⁸ As I begin this letter, I thank my God for all you believers in Rome. It is because of what Jesus Christ has done for us that I am able to do that. I thank him because your trusting in Jesus Christ is something that people all over the Roman Empire [HYP] are talking about. ⁹ God, whom I devotedly serve as I proclaim to people the good message concerning his Son, knows that I tell the truth when I say that I always mention you whenever [DOU] I pray to God [HYP]. ¹⁰ I especially ask God that if he desires me to visit you, somehow at last I shall be able to do so. ¹¹ I pray this because I long to visit you to help you spiritually in order that you will become stronger spiritually. ¹² I long to visit you in order that you and I might encourage each other by means of our sharing with each other how each of us trusts in Jesus. ¹³ My fellow believers, many times I planned to visit you. I certainly want you to know [LIT] that. But I have not been able to come to you because I have been hindered {things have always prevented me} until the present time. I have wanted to come in order that I might help you to mature spiritually [IDM], as I have helped people to mature spiritually in many other non-Jewish groups [HYP]. ¹⁴ I feel obliged to proclaim the good message to all non-Jewish people, specifically to people who know the Greek language and culture and to those who do not know it, to people who are educated and to those who are uneducated. ¹⁵ As a result, what I have eagerly desired is that I might proclaim this good message to you who are living in Rome also.

Romans 1:16-17

***THEME:** I very confidently proclaim the good message about what Christ has done, both to Jews and non-Jews, because by that message God reveals his way of declaring all people righteous.*

¹⁶ That leads me to say that I very confidently proclaim [LIT] the good message about what Christ has done, because this good message is the powerful means that God uses to save from the guilt of their sins all people who trust in what Christ has done for them. Specifically, God first saves the Jews who believe the good message, and then he saves non-Jews. ¹⁷ By means of this good message God reveals how he erases the record of people's sins (OR, declares people no longer guilty for having sinned); and his doing this is entirely because [IDM] they trust in Christ. This is confirmed by what a prophet long ago wrote that God said, "Those <whose record of sin I have erased/whom I have declared no longer guilty for sin> because they trust in me will live forever."

Romans 1:18

***THEME:** God is making it clear to all Jewish people who are godless and wicked that he is angry with them.*

¹⁸ From where God rules in heaven he is making it clear to all non-Jewish people who show no respect for God and who do wicked things, that he is angry with them and that they deserve to be punished {that he would punish them} [MTY]. By means of their behaving wickedly, they keep other people from believing what they know to be true about God.

Romans 1:19-23

THEME: *Everyone can clearly know what God is like; so no one has a basis for saying, "We never knew about God."*

¹⁹ Everyone can clearly know what God is like, because God himself has revealed to everyone *what he is like*. ²⁰ People cannot see what God is like. But ever since he created the world, by means of what he created he has clearly revealed what he is like. He has made clear to everyone that he has always been able to do very powerful deeds. *Therefore, we should recognize that he is God, completely different from all that he created.* So no one has a basis for saying, "We never knew about God."²¹ Although *the non-Jews* knew what God is like, they did not honor him as God, nor did they thank *him for what he had done*. But instead, they began to think foolish *things about him*, and they became unable to understand [MET] *what he wanted them to know*.²² Although they claimed that they were wise, they became foolish,²³ and they refused to *admit that God is glorious and will never die*. Instead, they made and worshipped idols *that resembled people who will some day die, and then they made other idols that resembled birds and four-footed animals, and finally they made idols that resembled reptiles*.

Romans 1:24-27

THEME: *So God let the non-Jewish people feel compelled to do disgraceful things, which resulted in their dishonoring their bodies sexually. He did this because they worshipped idols and things that were created instead of worshipping God. As a result of both men and women having unnatural sexual relations, they have been punished as they deserve.*

²⁴ So God allowed *the non-Jews* do immoral sexual things that they [SYN] strongly desired, things *that their desires were compelling them to do*. As a result, they *began to dishonor each other's bodies by their sexual actions*.²⁵ Also, they *chose to worship false gods* instead <of admitting/of choosing to believe> what is true *about God*. They worshipped and served things *that God created* instead of *worshipping and serving God*, the one who created *everything*. *They did this even though he deserves that those he created would forever praise him. Amen!/May it be so!*

²⁶ So, God allowed *the non-Jews* to do shameful sexual things that they *strongly* desired. As a result, many women did not have natural sexual relations *with their husbands* [EUP]. Instead, they were doing sexual actions with other women [EUP].

²⁷ Similarly, *many men* <stopped having/did not have> natural sexual relations with women [EUP]. Instead, they strongly desired to have sexual relations with other men. They committed *homosexual* acts with other men, acts that were shameful. As a result, *God has punished them by sicknesses* in their bodies, which is what they deserve *because they thought wrongly that God would not punish them for doing that*.

Romans 1:28-32

THEME: *The result of God's letting people become obsessed by their own depraved thoughts was that they themselves began to do all manner of evil things that God says are improper. They even approve of others doing such things.*

²⁸ Furthermore, because they decided that it was not *worthwhile* to know God, he allowed their own worthless thoughts to *completely control them*. As a result, they began doing *evil things that God says that people should not do*.²⁹ They strongly desire to do all *kinds of unrighteous deeds*. They strongly desire to do all *kinds of evil things to others*. They strongly desire to possess things that *belong to others*. They strongly desire to harm *others* in various ways. *Many non-Jews* are constantly envying *other people*. *Many* constantly desire to murder *people*. *Many* constantly desire to cause strife *between people*. *Many* constantly desire to deceive *others*. *Many* constantly desire to speak hatefully *about others* (OR, *to speak harmful things about others, things that are not true*). *Many* gossip *about others*.³⁰ *Many* slander *others*. *Many* act especially hatefully toward God. *Many* speak or act in an insulting way *toward others*. *Many* treat others contemptuously. *Many* boast *about themselves to others*. *Many* invent new ways to do evil deeds. *Many non-Jewish children* disobey their parents.³¹ *Many non-Jews* act in other morally foolish ways. *Many* do not do what they promised *others that they would do*. *Many* do not even love their own family members. *And many* do not act mercifully *toward other people*.³² Although they know that God has declared that those who do such things deserve to be killed, they not only habitually do these *kinds of evil things*, but they also approve of others who habitually do them.

Romans 2:1-5

THEME: *Any one of you Jews who condemns non-Jews for doing evil will be condemned by God, because you also do the same evil things.*

2 ¹ *God will severely punish non-Jewish people who habitually do evil deeds, because he has clearly revealed that he is angry with them*. So, when God judges *people*, he will not excuse any one of you Jews *to whom I am writing*. You(sg) say that *God should punish non-Jews for doing evil deeds*. But when any one of you says that, it is yourself whom you are saying that God should punish, because you(sg) do *some of the same evil deeds that the non-Jews do*.² We know very well that God will judge and punish fairly *non-Jewish* people who do such *evil deeds*.³ So, you who say *God should punish others for doing evil deeds* yet you do evil deeds yourself, <you should certainly not think that you yourself will be able to escape from being punished by God!/do you think that you yourself will be able to escape from being punished by God?> [RHQ]⁴ And you should not say, "God is acting very tolerantly and patiently toward me, so *I do not need to turn away from my sin* [DOU]." <You should realize that God is acting in a kind manner *toward you* in order to encourage

you(sg) to turn away from your sinful behavior!/Do you not realize that God is acting in a kind manner *toward you* in order to encourage you(sg) to turn away from your sinful behavior?> [RHQ] ⁵But instead, by your stubbornly refusing to turn away from your sinful behavior [DOU], you are causing [MET] God to punish you even more severely. *He will do that* at the time when he shows that he is angry and judges people fairly.

Romans 2:6-11

THEME: *Because God is not influenced by a person's status, he will recompense each person according to what that person has done.*

⁶ God will recompense everyone according to *what they deserve* for what they have done. ⁷ *Specifically*, some people, by persevering in doing good deeds, strive to be highly honored *by God* [DOU] and to receive a life that will not end. *God will reward them by enabling them* to live forever. ⁸ But some people act in a selfish way and refuse to believe that *what God says is true*, and they do the things that *God says* are wrong. *God will punish them very severely* [DOU, MTY]. ⁹ He will cause everyone who habitually does evil deeds to suffer greatly, *with the result that they will become severely distressed* [DOU]. This certainly will happen to the Jews *who refuse to accept God's message, because God gave them the privilege to be his special people*, but it will also happen to the non-Jews. ¹⁰ But *God will greatly reward spiritually* [MET, DOU] every person who habitually does good deeds. He will *certainly* do this for the Jews *because God chose them as his special people*, but he will also do it for the non-Jews. ¹¹ *God will do this fairly*, because people's status does not influence him.

Romans 2:12-16

THEME: *All non-Jews will be eternally separated from God for their sin and all Jews will be condemned for their sin, since it is only those who have continually obeyed his laws whom God will justify.*

¹² Although *non-Jews do not have* the laws that *God gave to Moses*, all *non-Jews* who sin will be eternally separated from God. He will *not consider whether or not they knew* the laws that he *gave to Moses*. And all the *Jews* who have sinned in spite of knowing the laws that *God gave to Moses will also be punished* {*God will also punish them*}. *They will be punished for disobeying* God's laws. ¹³ *It is right for them to be punished* {*God to punish them*} because it is not those who *merely* know God's laws whom he considers to be righteous. On the contrary, it is only those who continually have obeyed *all* <of God's laws/of the laws that *God gave to Moses*> <whom God will consider righteous/whose record of sins God will erase>. ¹⁴ Whenever the non-Jews, who do not have the laws *God gave to Moses*, naturally obey those laws, *they prove that* they have a law within their own minds, even though they do not have the laws *God gave to Moses*. ¹⁵ They show that they know in their own minds what *God commands in his laws* [MET], as each person in his very own conscience either accuses or excuses/defends *his behavior*. ¹⁶ *God will punish them* at the time when he will judge people according to what they have thought and done. He will judge them *even* for the things that they have done secretly. He will judge people by *authorizing* Christ Jesus *to judge them*. This is *what I tell people* when I preach the good message to them.

Romans 2:17-24

THEME: *It is disgusting that any one of you who has all the advantages of being a Jew would disobey God's law and, by doing so, insult God.*

¹⁷ Now I have something to say to any one of you Jews to whom I am writing: You(sg) boast about yourself saying, "I am a Jew." You(sg) trust that *God will save you because you possess* the laws that he *gave to Moses*. You boast that *you belong to God*. ¹⁸ You know what God desires. Because you have been taught {*people have taught you*} *God's laws*, you are able to know which things are right and to choose to do them. ¹⁹ You are certain that you *are able to show God's truth to non-Jews*, as guides *show the road* to those who are blind [MET]. You are certain that by what you say you can show God's way to the *non-Jews who do not understand it*, as a light shows the way to *those who walk in the darkness* [MET, DOU]. ²⁰ *You are certain that you can instruct/correct non-Jews, whom you consider foolish because of their not understanding God's message*. Because you have in God's laws a *written* expression of true knowledge [HEN], you are certain that you can teach *people who, being like children, do not know God's truth* [MET]. ²¹ *Since you claim that you have all these advantages because you are a Jew*, <it is disgusting that you who teach other people *that they should obey the laws God gave Moses* do not *obey the laws that you yourself teach*!/why is it that you who teach other people *that they should obey the laws God gave Moses* do not *obey the laws that you yourself teach*?> [RHQ] You who preach that people should not steal things, <it is disgusting that you yourself steal things!/why do you yourself steal things?> [RHQ] ²² You who command people not to have sexual relations with someone to whom they are not married, <it is disgusting that you commit adultery yourself!/why do you commit adultery yourself?> [RHQ] You who detest idols, <it is disgusting that you rob temples *where people worship idols*!/why do you rob temples *where people worship idols*?> [RHQ] ²³ You who boast saying, "*I have God's laws*," <it is disgusting that you disobey those same laws!/why do you disobey those same laws?> [RHQ] As a result you are insulting **God!** ²⁴ *You must not be like our ancestors, about whom were written these words in the Scriptures:* "The non-Jews speak evil about God because of the *evil actions of many of you Jews*." *They non-Jews say God must be a hypocrite if he condones the behavior of people like you.*

Romans 2:25-29

THEME: *God will consider non-Jews acceptable to him if they obey his laws, and such non-Jews will declare God is right in condemning those who disobey his laws, because it is only those who are changed inwardly who are true Jews and acceptable to God.*

²⁵ Any one of you who is circumcised to show that he belongs to God can benefit from that if he obeys the laws God gave to Moses. But if you(sg), a circumcised person, disobey God's laws, God will consider that you who are circumcised are no better in God's sight than someone who is not circumcised. ²⁶ <This means that God will certainly consider that even non-Jews who are not circumcised can become his people if they obey the things that he commanded in his laws./So will not God consider that even non-Jews who are not circumcised can <become his people/become acceptable to him> if they obey the things that he commanded in his laws?> [RHQ] ²⁷ If any one of you disobeys God's laws, even though you(sg) have the Scriptures and even though someone has circumcised you {you are circumcised} God will punish you. And those people who are not circumcised, but who obey God's laws, will declare that God is right when he says that he will punish you. ²⁸ It is not those who perform rituals to show they are God's people who are true Jews, and it is not being circumcised in their bodies that causes God to accept them [MTY]. ²⁹ On the contrary, we whom God has changed inwardly are true Jews [MTY]. And God has accepted us because we have allowed God's Spirit to change our hearts, not because we perform rituals. Even if other people will not praise us, God will praise us.

Romans 3:1-8

THEME: *My reply to the objection that there is no advantage in being a Jew or being circumcised is that there is much advantage, especially since God entrusted his promises to us. My reply to the objection that God has not kept his promise is that he certainly has, for his promises are always true. My reply to the objection that it is not right for God to punish us Jews is that it certainly is right for him to punish us, because if God did not judge us Jews he could not judge anyone.*

3 ¹ Someone may object to this, saying, "If being circumcised does not cause God to accept us Jews, <there is no advantage in being a Jew over being a non-Jew./is there any advantage in being a Jew over being a non-Jew?> [RHQ] Being circumcised does not benefit us Jews at all!" ² I would reply that being Jews benefits us in many ways [HYP]. First of all, it benefits us because it was to our ancestors that God's words, words that contain his promises, were given {that God gave his words, words that contain his promises}. ³ Many Jews did not obey God as they promised that they would. So someone might ask, "Does their not being faithful mean that God will not bless us Jews as he promised that he would?" ⁴ I would reply, "No, it certainly does not mean that! God always does what he has promised, even though people do not. All those who accuse God of not keeping his promises to us Jews are very mistaken." What King David wrote about God's justly saying that he would punish him for his sins is also true of those who accuse God of not keeping his promises. What he said to God was, "So everyone must acknowledge that what you(sg) have said about them (OR, their sin) is true, and you will always win the case when you are accused {when people accuse you}."

⁵ So if we Jews' being wicked [PRS] shows that it is right that God does not bless us, what shall we say/conclude? Shall we conclude that it is not right for God to be angry and punish us Jews [MTY]? I should not be saying these things, but I am speaking as ordinary humans speak. ⁶ We should certainly not conclude that God should not judge us, because if God did not judge us Jews, <it would not possibly be right for him to judge anyone in the world [MTY]!/how could he judge anyone in the world?> [MTY, RHQ] ⁷ But someone might object and say to me, "The fact that God truly keeps his promises becomes very clear/evident because of my not doing what God has commanded. But the result is that people praise God! So <God should no longer say that I should be punished {that he should punish me} on account of my having sinned!/why should God still say that I should be punished {that he should punish me} on account of my having sinned?> [RHQ] ⁸ If what you, Paul, say is true, then <we might as well/it is all right for us to> do evil things in order that good things like that will result! For example, then people will praise God!" Some people speak evil about me by their falsely saying that I say such things. God will fairly/justly punish people who say such things about me!

Romans 3:9-18

THEME: *My reply to a query about whether God will treat Jews more favorably than non-Jews is no, because the Scriptures make clear that all people are condemned by God for their sin.*

⁹ If someone would ask, "Shall we conclude that God will treat us Jews more favorably and will treat the non-Jews less favorably [RHQ]?" I would reply that we can certainly not conclude that! I have already shown you that all people, the Jews and also the non-Jews, have sinned and so they deserve to be punished {that God will punish them} [PRS]. ¹⁰ The following words that are written {prophets have written} in the Scriptures support this,

No person is righteous. There is not even one righteous person!

¹¹ There is no one who understands how to live properly (OR, about God). There is no one who seeks/desires to know God!

¹² Absolutely everyone has turned away [MET] from God. God considers them depraved (OR, Everyone has become useless to God). There is no one who acts righteously; no, there is not even one!

¹³ What people say [MTY] is foul/bad, like the smell that comes from a grave that has been {that people have} opened [MET]. By what people say [MTY], they deceive people.

By what they say [MTY] they injure people, just like the poison of snakes injures people [MET].

¹⁴ They are continually <cursing/asking God to do harmful things to> others and saying <cruel/harsh/hateful> things [MTY].

¹⁵ They <go quickly/are eager> to murder people [MTY].

¹⁶ Wherever they go they ruin everything and make *people* miserable [MTY].

¹⁷ They have not/never known how to *live peacefully with other people*.

¹⁸ "They absolutely refuse to fear/reverence God [SYN]!"

Romans 3:19-20

THEME: In summary, no one is able to object to God's condemnation; everyone has been declared guilty by God.

¹⁹ Furthermore, we know that it is to *Jewish* people, *who are* required to obey God's laws, that Moses wrote those laws [PRS]. *We can infer from this that there are no Jews or non-Jews* [SYN] who are able to say anything *in reply to God's saying that he will punish them for having sinned*. God has declared everyone in the world [MTY] guilty! ²⁰ It is not because people have done the things that God's laws *require* that God will <erase the record of their sins/declare them no longer guilty for sin>, *because no one has done those things completely*. In fact, the result of *our knowing God's laws* is that we know clearly that we have sinned (OR, are sinful).

Romans 3:21-26

THEME: Now God erases the record of sins of everyone, Jew and non-Jew, who trusts in what Jesus Christ has done for them. God presented Christ as the one who would atone for sins by dying on the cross.

²¹ But God's <erasing the record of our sins/declaring us no longer guilty> **does not depend on our obeying the laws that he gave Moses**. It has now been {God has now} revealed to us how he erases the record of our sins *by a different way*. It was written about *by Moses* {Moses wrote about it} in the laws [PRS] God gave him, and it was also written about by the prophets {the prophets also wrote about it}. ²² God erases the record of our sins because we trust in *what Jesus Christ has done for us*. God does this for every person who trusts *in Christ*, because *he considers* that there is no difference *between Jews and non-Jews*. ²³ **All** people have done evil, and all people have failed to accomplish the glorious *goals* that God set for them. ²⁴ Our record of sins has been erased {God erased the record of our sins} by his acting kindly *to forgive our sins*, without our doing anything to earn it. Christ Jesus accomplished this *by dying for us*. ²⁵ God showed that Christ was the one who would atone for (OR, forgive) our sins *with the blood that flowed from his body when he died*. *God redeems/forgives us* because of our trusting *in Christ's having died for us*. *God wanted* to show that he acts justly. *He wanted to do that* because, before *Christ came*, God did not punish *everyone who sinned*. *So it seemed as though he was not being just*. But he was overlooking their sins during *that time*, ²⁶ because he is patient. *God arranged for Christ to die for us*. By doing that, he now shows that he is just, and he shows that he is justly able to erase the record of sins for everyone who trusts/believes in Jesus.

Romans 3:27-31

THEME: So we are prevented from boasting that it was because of our obeying the Mosaic laws. And God will also accept non-Jews on the same basis. And by agreeing that people are declared righteous by their trusting in Christ, we actually confirm, not nullify, the Mosaic laws.

²⁷ It is not at all [RHQ] because of *our obeying the laws of Moses that God erases the record of our sins*. So, <there is no way that we can boast that God does that because of our obeying those laws./how can we boast about God erasing the record of our sins because of our obeying those laws?> [RHQ] Instead, *it is because of our believing/trusting in Christ that God erases the record of our sins*. ²⁸ *We cannot boast about that*, because we conclude that the record of our sins is erased {God erases the record of our sins} because of our trusting *in Christ*. God does not erase the record of our sins because of our obeying the laws *that he gave to Moses*, *because it is impossible for us to completely obey them*. ²⁹ <You who are Jews certainly should not think that is you are the only ones whom God will accept!/Do you Jews think it is you alone whom God will accept?> [RHQ] <You certainly should realize that he will accept non-Jews, too./Do you not realize that he will accept non-Jews, too?> [RHQ] Of course, *he will accept non-Jews also*, ³⁰ because, *as you firmly believe*, there is only one God, who will erase the record of Jews' [MTY] sins if they trust *in what Christ has done*, and who will similarly erase the record of non-Jews' [MTY] sins if they trust *in Christ*. ³¹ So, *if someone should ask concerning the laws that God gave Moses*, "By saying that *God erases the record of our sins because of our trusting in Christ*, does that mean that those laws now are useless?", *I would reply*, "Certainly not. Instead, we truly fulfill the laws *that God gave Moses*."

Romans 4:1-8

THEME: We can draw conclusions from Abraham's life about how God erases the record of our sins. Abraham could not boast about his accomplishing that because the Scriptures record that it was because he believed what God promised that God erased the record of his sins. God's doing that was a gift, not a reward.

4 ¹ Abraham is the *revered* ancestor of us Jews. So <think about what we can conclude from what happened to Abraham about how God can erase the record of our sins./what can we conclude from what happened to Abraham about how God can erase the record of our sins?> [RHQ] ² If it was because of Abraham's doing *good* things that the record of his sins was

erased {that God erased the record of his sins}, Abraham could then have been able to boast *about that to people*, but he would not have had any basis to boast to God *about it*.³ Remember that in the Scriptures it is written {someone wrote} [PRS] that Abraham believed what God *promised* [RHQ], and as a result the record of his sins was erased {God erased the record of his sins}.⁴ If we receive wages for work that we do, those wages are not considered to be a gift. Instead, they are considered to be what we have earned. Similarly, if God erases the record of our sins because we did things to earn God's favor, we would not consider that God's erasing the record of our sin was a gift. Instead, we would consider it as what we had earned.⁵ But suppose that we do not do things to gain God's acceptance. Suppose that we instead trust in God, who erases the record of sins of wicked people. Then the erasing of the record of our sins because of our trusting in Christ is considered to be a gift to us, *not something that we earned*.⁶ Similarly, it is as David wrote in the Psalms about people being happy whose record of sins God has erased even though they have not done things to earn it. David wrote:

⁷ God is pleased with people whose sins have been {whose sins he has} forgiven, and whose sins he has decided to forget [DOU].

⁸ God causes to be happy the people whose sins he no longer keeps a record of.

Romans 4:9-12

THEME: *This happiness of knowing that God has erased the record of our sins is also for the non-Jews. Remember that it was before Abraham was circumcised, when he was still in effect a non-Jew, that God did that. He later received circumcision simply as a sign of God having erased the record of his sins because of his faith. The result was that he became a spiritual father of all who believe in God as he did, whether they are circumcised or not.*

⁹ As for our being happy because God has erased the record of our sins, <it is not something that only we Jews can experience./is it [MTY] something that only we Jews can experience?> [RHQ] No, it is also something that non-Jews can experience [MTY]. What is written in the Scriptures, that it was because Abraham trusted in God that the record of his sins was erased {God erased the record of his sins}, also shows that this is true.¹⁰ <Think about when God erased the record of Abraham's sins./When did God erase the record of Abraham's sins?> [RHQ] <Consider whether it happened after someone circumcised Abraham to mark him as one who belonged to God, or before someone circumcised him./Did it happen after Abraham was circumcised to be marked as one who belonged to God, or before he was circumcised?> [RHQ] It happened before he was circumcised, not after he was circumcised.¹¹ Many years later, God commanded that Abraham be circumcised. Abraham's accepting that ritual simply showed that he knew that God had accepted him. He knew that God had erased the record of his sins because he trusted in God while he was still, in effect, a non-Jew because he had not been circumcised. So we can understand that Abraham became <a spiritual ancestor/like an ancestor> to all of us whose record of sins has been erased {whose sins God has erased the record of} because we believe in God's promise, even though some of us are not circumcised.¹² Likewise, Abraham is the spiritual ancestor of all us Jews who are not merely circumcised but who, more importantly, believe in God's promise as our ancestor Abraham did, even before he was circumcised.

Romans 4:13-17a

THEME: *It was because Abraham trusted in God that God erased the record of his sins and promised him many blessings. So what God promised is guaranteed to all, both Jews and non-Jews, who trust in God as Abraham did.*

¹³ God promised Abraham and his descendants that they would receive the blessings that he promised to give to the people in the world. But when he promised that, it was not because Abraham obeyed the laws that God later gave to Moses. Instead, it was because Abraham believed that God would do what he promised that he would do. As a result, God erased the record of his sins.¹⁴ If we think that it is those who obey God's laws who will receive what he has promised, it is useless for us to think that he will erase the record of our sins just because we trust in him. And it is pointless for us to think that he will give us what he promised just because we trust in him. Remember that it is stated in God's law [PRS] that he will punish people who do not perfectly obey them, and remember that wherever [MTY] laws exist, people disobey them [LIT].¹⁶ So it is because we trust in God that we will receive what he has promised. It is not because we perfectly obey God's laws. He wants <to erase the record of our sins/to declare us no longer guilty> without our earning it. As a result, what God now promises, he guarantees to give to all people who are Abraham's spiritual descendants. He promises to do that not only for us Jewish believers, who have God's laws and trust in him as Abraham did, but also for those non-Jews who do not have God's laws but who trust in him as Abraham did. Abraham is the spiritual ancestor of all of us believers.¹⁷ What is written {What Moses wrote} in the Scriptures about what God promised Abraham shows that this is true. God said to him, "It is in order that you(sg) may be the ancestor of many ethnic groups that I have appointed you."

Romans 4:17b-22

THEME: *It was because Abraham confidently believed God's promise to give him many descendants, when there was no physical basis for his hoping that this would happen, that God erased the record of his sins.*

God guaranteed that he would give Abraham many descendants. Abraham confidently believed that God would do that,¹⁸ even though there was no physical reason for him to hope that he would have descendants, because he and his wife were too old to bear children. But God is the one who causes dead people to live again, and who talks about things that do not yet exist as already existing. God said to Abraham, "You will have so many descendants that they will be as impossible

to count as the stars.” And Abraham believed that, and he believed that he would become the ancestor of many ethnic groups. ¹⁹ He did not doubt *that God would do what he promised*, even though he knew that his body was already as *incapable of begetting children as if he were dead* [MET] because he was about a hundred years old. And *even though he realized that Sarah had never been able to become pregnant* [IDM], ²⁰ he did not doubt at all that *God would do what he had promised*. Instead, he trusted *in God* more/very strongly, and he thanked God *for what God was going to do*. ²¹ He was also convinced {very sure} that the thing that God promised, God was able to do. ²² And that is the reason that the record of his sins was erased {God erased the record of his sins}.

Romans 4:23-25

THEME: *The words about God erasing the record of Abraham’s sins were written also to assure us who believe in God.*

²³ The words *in the Scriptures*, “the record of his sins was erased {God erased the record of his sins},” are not only about Abraham. ²⁴ They were also written {They also wrote that} for us whose record of sins would be erased {God would erase}. They were written {They wrote it} for us who believe *God*, the one who caused our Lord Jesus to become alive again after he died. ²⁵ Jesus allowed *men* to execute [MTY] him so that *God could forgive* our evil deeds. And *God* caused Jesus to live again because *God wanted to show that because of the death of Jesus he was able to erase the record of our sins*.

Romans 5:1-5

THEME: *Because God has erased the record of our sins, we have peace with him, we experience his acting kindly toward us, we rejoice because we expect to receive God’s glory, and we even rejoice in suffering because we know the results that it brings.*

5 ¹ Because we trusted *in Christ*, the record of our sins has been erased {God has erased the record of our sins}. So we now have a peaceful relationship with God because of *our trust* in *what* our Lord Jesus Christ *has done for us*. ² Because of *what Christ has done*, God has also enabled us to begin experiencing his continually acting toward us in ways that we do not deserve. Also, we rejoice because we are confidently expecting that *God will gladly show* us how great he is. ³ We rejoice even when we suffer *as a result of our trusting in Christ*, because we know that when we are suffering, the result is that we learn to endure things *patiently*. ⁴ And we know that when we endure things *patiently*, the result is that *God approves of us*. And when we know that *God approves of us*, the result is that we confidently expect *that he will do great things for us*. ⁵ And we are very confident [PRS] concerning the things that we wait expectantly *for*, because God loves us very much. His Holy Spirit, who has been {whom he has} given to us, *causes* us to understand how much God loves us.

Romans 5:6-11

THEME: *Because Christ died for us ungodly people, he will certainly save us from God’s eternal punishment, and so we boast of what he has done for us.*

⁶ When we were unable *to save ourselves*, it was Christ who, at the time *that God chose*, died on behalf of *us* ungodly people. ⁷ Rarely would anyone die on behalf of another person, *even if* that person were righteous, although for a good person perhaps someone might be courageous enough to die on behalf of such a person. ⁸ Nevertheless, as for God, the way he showed us that he loves us is that Christ died on our behalf **while we were still rebelling against God**. ⁹ The record of our sins has been erased {God has erased the record of our sins} because of *what Christ accomplished when his blood* [MTY] *flowed when he died*. So it is even more certain that we will be saved by Christ {that Christ will save us} from God’s punishing us *eternally* [MTY]. ¹⁰ Even when we were acting hostilely towards God, he enabled us to have a peaceful relationship with him as a result of his Son dying *for us*. So it is even more certain that we will be saved {Christ will be able to save us} *from God’s punishing us* [MTY] because he is alive *again* and because *God* has enabled us to have a peaceful relationship *with himself*. ¹¹ And that’s not all! Now we also rejoice about *the things that God has done for us* because of our Lord Jesus Christ *dying for us* and enabling us to have a peaceful relationship with God.

Romans 5:12-21

THEME: *Although the sin of one man, Adam, led to all people dying and God declaring that they deserved to be punished, Christ’s righteous act of obedience when he died led to many people experiencing God’s kindness and being declared righteous and living eternally, and it will also result in their ruling with Christ.*

¹² *What you can learn from what I have written so far is as follows:* All people are sinful [PRS], and that is the result of *Adam, the first man whom God created, sinning long ago*. Adam died [PRS] because he sinned. So, **all people who have lived since then die**, because *it is as though all people sinned when Adam sinned*. ¹³ *People in* [MTY] the world sinned before *God gave his laws to Moses*. But people are not considered *by God* {God does not consider people} to be guilty for their sins if there is no law *stating that what they did was sinful*. ¹⁴ But we know that from *the time when Adam lived until the time when Moses lived*, all people sinned, and they died as *a consequence* [PRS, MET]. Even people who sinned differently from the way *Adam sinned, died*. *Adam’s sin affected all people*, just like what *Christ did*, the one who came later, can affect all people. ¹⁵ But *the results of God’s erasing the record of our sins as a gift to us* are not like *the results of Adam’s sinning*. The result of one man, *Adam*, sinning was that many/all people have died. But *it is certain, however*, that many people have abundantly experienced God’s acting kindly toward them in a way they did not deserve. *It is also certain* that they have experienced God’s erasing the record of their sins as the result of one man, Jesus Christ, acting <kindly

toward them/towards them in a way they did not deserve>. ¹⁶ And *there is another way in which God's freely erasing the record of our sins* is not like *the results of Adam's sinning*. One person, *Adam*, sinned. As a result, God declared that all people deserve to be punished. Many people sinned. But what God did was that he erased the record of their sins without their earning it. ¹⁷ All people die [MET, PRS] because of what one man, *Adam*, did. But now many of us experience that God has abundantly acted towards us in ways we did not deserve, and we experience that he has erased the record of our sins without our earning it. It is also very certain that we will rule *with Christ* (OR, share *the glory* of Christ's being king), *in heaven*. *This will happen* because of *what* one man, Jesus Christ, *did for us*.

¹⁸ So, *because one man, Adam*, disobeyed *God's law*, that resulted in all people deserving to be punished {that God punish them}. Similarly, because one man, *Jesus*, acted righteously *by obeying God when he died*, the result was that God is *able to erase the record of all people's sins and enable them to live eternally*. ¹⁹ It was because one person, *Adam*, disobeyed God that many/all people became sinners. Similarly, it is because one person, *Jesus*, obeyed *God when he died* that the record of many people's sins will be erased {that *he will erase the record of many people's sins*}. ²⁰ *God gave* [PRS] his laws to *Moses* [PRS] in order that *people might realize* how greatly they had sinned; but as people sinned more, God continued to act even more kindly toward them, in a way that they did not deserve. ²¹ He did that in order that just like people everywhere inevitably sin, *which results in their dying* [MET, PRS], people everywhere might inevitably experience God's acting kindly towards them in a way they do not deserve [MET, PRS] by *erasing the record of their sins*. *The result is that people can live eternally* because of what Jesus Christ our Lord *did for them*.

Romans 6:1-14

THEME: *If someone were to say that perhaps we should continue to sin in order that God may continue to act more kindly toward us, I would reply that we who ought to consider ourselves unresponsive to sinful desires should certainly not continue sinning. We must keep remembering that it is as though our former sinful nature has ceased to function, and it is as though we have become unresponsive to sinful desires, living in a new way. So do not let the desire to commit sin control you. Instead, present yourselves to God to do righteous things.*

6 ¹ Someone might [RHQ] say *in reply to what I have written that since God acted kindly toward us* in a way we did not deserve *because we sinned*, <perhaps we should continue to sin in order that he may continue to act even more kindly toward us *and keep on forgiving us*?> [RHQ] ² *I would reply*, No, certainly not! We *ought to consider* that our sinful desires [MET] *cannot make us do what they want us to do, just like we can not make a corpse do what we want it to do*. So <it is not right that we continue to sin!/how can we continue to sin?> [RHQ] ³ When we were baptized {*asked someone to baptize us*} in order to show that we have a relationship with (OR, are united to) Jesus Christ, our *being baptized was to declare that it was as though we died with Christ*. <*I want you to remember that!/Do you not know that?*> [RHQ] ⁴ So, when we were baptized {someone baptized us}, *it was as though we were buried with Christ*. *We were baptized* in order to indicate that *we would not let our sinful desires make us do what they want us to do, just like people cannot make a corpse do what they want it to do* [MET]. *We were baptized to signify that we would* continually conduct our lives in a new way, just like Christ was caused to live again in a new way by the great power of *God his Father*. ⁵ Because of our close relationship with Christ, we have *separated ourselves from the former way in which we conducted our lives, just like he was separated from his physical life when he died* [MET]. But God will also certainly *enable us to live in a new way, just like he enabled Christ to live again*. ⁶ We must keep remembering that when Christ died on the cross [MET], *it was as though our sinful nature died with him*. *It has lost its power to make us do what it wants us to do* [MET]. That happened in order that we would not do the *sinful things that our bodies* [MET], which desire to sin, want us to do, and in order that we would no longer have to sin [MET], as slaves *have to do what their masters want*. ⁷ *We are, as it were, freed {free} from sinful desires* [MET] *controlling us, just like those who have died are free from anything controlling them*. ⁸ Since *it is as though we died with Christ*, we believe that we will continue to live with him. ⁹ We know that since *God enabled Christ to live again after he died*, Christ will never die again. Nothing will ever be able to make him die again [PRS]. ¹⁰ When he died, he died once for *people* who had sinned, and he will never die again; but in regard to his living *again now*, he lives in order to *serve/honor* God. ¹¹ Similarly, you must consider that *it is as though you have become unable to do what your sinful desires* [MET] want, as a corpse *is not able to do what anyone wants it to do*. You must also consider that because of your relationship to Christ Jesus you are living *in a new way* in order to *serve/honor* God. ¹² So, do not let the *desire to sin* [PRS] control your bodies [MET] with the result that you do the sinful things that you desire to do. *Remember that your bodies will surely die, but your spirits will never die*. ¹³ Do not let any of your body parts do wicked things, as *you did* [MET] *when you were spiritually dead*. Instead, present yourselves to God as people who are alive *spiritually*. Present all your body parts to God, *to allow him to use them to do righteous things*. ¹⁴ Do not let a *desire to sin* control you [PRS]. The laws *that God gave Moses* did not enable you to *stop sinning*. But *now* God controls you and kindly helps you *not to sin*.

Romans 6:15-23

THEME: *If someone should conclude that people can sin now because they are not obligated to obey the Mosaic laws, I would say, "Certainly not!" Instead, let your minds compel your bodies to act righteously.*

¹⁵ *I suppose that certain people might think about what I have just said and they might say* [RHQ], "*You say that the laws God gave Moses did not enable us to stop sinning, but that God is now treating us kindly in ways we do not deserve. <That seems to mean that God permits us to continue sinning./Does that mean that God permits us to continue*

sinning?> [RHQ]” My reply to that is no, we should certainly not continue *sinning!*¹⁶ Slaves have to obey *what their masters command* [MET] *them to do.* <I want you to remember this:/Do you not know this?> [RHQ] Similarly, if you present yourselves to someone *in order to obey him*, you will be **the slaves** [MET] of the person you obey. Similarly, *if you have yielded yourselves to do the sinful things you desire*, you are slaves of your sinful desires [PRS], and you will be eternally separated from God. *If you have yielded yourselves to obey God*, you are slaves of God and you need to *live* righteously.¹⁷ You were once slaves *to your sinful desires*. But you began to sincerely obey the new teaching [MET] that you were taught {that *people* taught you}. I thank God for that.¹⁸ I also *thank God that* you have been freed {that he has freed you} from *being controlled by a desire to sin* and that you have become *as though you were slaves* [MET] to *living* righteously [MET].¹⁹ I am illustrating what I say *by talking about slavery* because your human nature prevents you from understanding *spiritual truth* easily. *In the past* you willingly did the immoral and unlawful things that *your minds compelled* your bodies to do [MET], *just like slaves do what their masters compel them to do.* As a result, you did even more unlawful things. Now, *you need to* willingly allow *your minds to compel* your bodies to *act* righteously, [MET] in order that you will behave in a holy/pure way.²⁰ When you were *like slaves because your sinful desires compelled you to do* sinful things [MET], you were not *concerned about behaving* righteously [MET].²¹ Nevertheless, *doing* those things resulted in your being separated from God, so <you did not benefit at all from *doing* the *sinful* things that you are now ashamed of./what did you gain from *doing* the things that you are now ashamed of?> [RHQ]²² But you have been freed {God has freed you} from *letting the desire to sin* control you. You have become *as though you were* [MET] the slaves of God. So now the result is that God has caused you to completely belong to him and, as a result, you will live eternally.²³ *What people receive for sinning is that they are* eternally separated from God. That is *like wages* that *people receive.* [MET] But what God gives us is a gift. What he gives us is that we live eternally because of *our relationship with* (OR, because *we are united to*) Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 7:1-6

THEME: *You know that after people die they are freed from being required to obey any law. Similarly, God has freed us from being required to obey all the Jewish rituals and laws.*

7¹ My fellow believers, you know about laws. So <you certainly know (OR, I want you to remember) that people have to obey laws [PRS] *only while they are alive./do you not know that people have to obey laws [PRS] only while they are alive?*> [RHQ]² For example, a woman is required by the law {the law requires a woman} *to obey and be faithful to her husband* as long as he is alive. But if her husband dies, she is freed *from having to* {*no longer has to*} *obey* the law about *remaining married to* her husband.³ Therefore, a woman will be called {people will call a woman} an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she no longer *has to obey* that law. Then she will not be an adulteress if she marries another man.⁴ Likewise, my fellow believers, *just like people are free from having to obey any law after they die* [MET], you *and I* have been freed {God has freed you *and me*} from *having to obey* all the Jewish rituals and laws [MET]. *That is because it is as though* we died with Christ *when he was crucified.* Now you *and I* belong to someone else [MET], *like a woman who marries again after her husband dies belongs to another man.* Specifically, you *and I* belong to *Christ*, who has been raised from the dead {whom God has caused to live again after he died}, in order that we may live righteously [IDM] to *honor* God.⁵ When our self-directed nature *controlled* us, desires *that led us to sin* were acting in our bodies. *Those desires were increased because of our knowing God’s laws* [PRS]. As a result *we did evil things* [IDM] *that* caused us to be separated from God.⁶ But now we are freed {free} from *having to obey all the Jewish rituals—it is as though* we have died. The result is that now we are not controlled by those rituals {those rituals do not control us now}. So we serve God, not by *having to obey* those rituals, which is the old way, but in the new way, as *God’s Spirit helps us to serve him.*

Romans 7:7-12

THEME: *My reply to the objection that the laws of Moses are evil because they cause us to sin is that the laws are holy and good; what the laws do are simply to reveal that what we are doing is sinful.*

⁷ *Someone might object*, saying, “<The laws *that God gave Moses* must be evil *if our sinful desires* are increased because of our knowing those laws. [MTY]/Are not the laws *that God gave Moses* evil *if they stir up our sinful desires?*>” [MTY, RHQ] *I would reply* that they certainly are not *evil, even though our sinful desires are increased.* What I would reply is that I, *for example*, realized that *what I was doing* was sinful only because of *what is written* {Moses wrote} in those laws. For example, I realized that *coveting is sinful* only because he wrote in those laws [PRS], “You must not covet.”⁸ And because of what that commandment *stated*, my *sinful desire to have things that belong to others* [PRS] caused me to covet in many ways. *Our desire to sin* is not stimulated [MET] when there is no law *that prohibits our doing sinful things.*⁹ Formerly, when I did not *know* what God’s laws *required*, I used to live *without worrying about what I was doing.* But when I *became aware that God* commanded, “You must not covet,” I suddenly realized [PRS] that I was sinning,¹⁰ and *I realized that* I was separated from God. The laws that *I thought would enable me to live eternally as a result of my obeying them* caused me to *realize that* I was separated from God!¹¹ *My desire to sin* found a way [PRS] to deceive me by *making me think wrongly that* I could keep *on sinning and at the same time obey* those laws *enough so that I would live eternally*, and *thus it* caused me to be separated from God [PRS].¹² So *we conclude that* the laws *that God gave to Moses* are holy. What God commanded *about not coveting, along with all the other things that he commanded*, is also holy, and it is just and good.

Romans 7:13

THEME: *My reply to the objection that God's law, being good, causes people to become spiritually dead is no, it is our desire to commit sin that causes us to sin and become spiritually dead.*

¹³ So, if someone were to object saying, "The laws that God gave Moses, which are good, <resulted in my being separated from God/did they result in my being separated from God?> [RHQ]" I would reply, "Certainly they did not *do that!*" But instead, those laws, which are good, stimulated *my desire to sin*. I knew that the result was that I was separated from God. And also, because I *learned what God had commanded*, I knew that what I was doing was *truly sinful*.

Romans 7:14-25

THEME: *The laws came from God's Spirit, but you and I are influenced by our sinful natures. We often do not do the things that we desire, and we do the things that we detest because of a desire to sin that permeates us and prevents us from doing good, unless Christ frees us from being controlled by these desires.*

¹⁴ We know that the laws that God gave Moses came from God's Spirit. But as for me, I am *influenced by my self-directed nature*. It is as though I have been forced to become a slave of *my desire to sin* [MET]. ¹⁵ The things that I do, I *often* [HYP] do not understand. That is, *sometimes* [HYP] it is *the good things* that I want to do that I do not do. And *sometimes* [HYP] it is the *evil things* that I detest that I do. ¹⁶ Since I *do the evil things* that I do not want to do, I agree that the laws of God are good. ¹⁷ So, it is not that I do *evil things because I wish to do them*. Instead, *I do sinful things because the desire to sin causes me to do them*. The *desire to sin* <is within/permeates> me [PRS]. ¹⁸ I know that my self-directed nature will not *let me* [PRS] do anything that is good. I know this because **I want to do what is good**, but **I do not do** what is good. ¹⁹ I do not do the good things that I want to do. Instead, it is **evil things** that I do not want to do that I do. ²⁰ Because I do *evil things* that I do not want to do, it is not that I do *evil things because I want to*. Instead, *I do them because my self-directed nature, which permeates me [PRS], causes me to do them*. ²¹ I find, then, that what always happens is that when I want to do what is good, there is an *evil desire* present within me that [PRS] *prevents me from doing good*. ²² With my new inner nature I like the laws of God very much. ²³ Nevertheless, I sense that there is a different force that is in <my body/me> [PRS, SYN]. It is opposed to what with my mind *I desire to do* [MET], and it puts me inescapably under the control of [MET] the *sinful desires* that I have [SYN]. ²⁴ <When I consider this, I feel that I am a very wretched person. I want someone to set me free from the control of what my body *desires*, in order that I might not be separated from God./Will someone set me free from the control of what my body *desires*, in order that I might not be separated from God?> [RHQ] *I also think that what I have experienced is the same as what all believers experience*. ²⁵ I thank God that it is by Jesus Christ our Lord *that we can be free from the control of what our bodies desire*. So, *with our minds, you and I* on the one hand want to obey God's laws. *But also, you and I often let our sinful desires control us* because of our self-directed nature.

Romans 8:1-11

THEME: *God will not in any way condemn those who are united to Christ Jesus, because God's Spirit has freed us from the inevitability of sinning and from spiritual death.*

8¹ Because *God has erased the record of our sins because we trust in what Christ has done for us*, now *God will not condemn and punish those/us* who have a relationship with (OR, are united to) Christ Jesus. ² *God's Spirit causes us to live in a new way* [PRS] as a result of what Christ Jesus *did for us*. And he has set up a way by which he frees *each of us* from continually being forced to sin (OR, to obey our self-directed natures) and from being separated from God. ³ What we could not do *by trying to obey the laws of God* [PRS], because our self-directed nature was too weak *to obey them*, God did. He sent his own Son *into the world in order that his Son might atone* for our sin. His Son came having a body (OR, human nature) that was like *the body* (OR, the *human nature*) of us people who sin. *By sending his Son in this way*, he condemned and punished *his Son, who never sinned, instead of punishing us, who sinned* [MTY]. He did that *by making his Son's body a sacrifice* (OR, *by causing his Son's body to suffer/die for all our sin*). ⁴ So we can now fulfill all that God required in his laws. We do this, not by our acting the way our sinful human nature *desires*, but instead by living as *God's Spirit desires us to live*. ⁵ People who live according to what their self-directed nature *desires* think about and are concerned about what their self-directed nature *desires*. But people who *live* according to what *God's Spirit desires think about and are concerned about* what *God's Spirit desires*. ⁶ Those people who [PRS] think about and are concerned about what their self-directed nature *desires* will not live eternally (OR, will be separated from God). But those people who think about and are concerned about what *God's Spirit desires* will live *eternally* and have *inner peace*. ⁷ Let me explain this. *To the extent that* people [PRS] think about and are concerned about what their self-directed nature *desires*, they are acting contrary to God. They do not obey the laws of God. In fact, they are not even **able to obey his laws**. ⁸ The people who let their self-directed nature *control them* cannot do what pleases God. ⁹ But **we** do not have to let our self-directed nature *control us*. Instead, we can *let God's Spirit control us*, because he lives within us. If people do not have *living in them* the Spirit *who comes from Christ*, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But since *Christ is living in you/us by his Spirit, although your/our bodies are certain to die because you/we sin, your/our spirits are alive because God has erased the record of your/our sins*. ¹¹ *God caused Jesus to live again after he died*. And because his Spirit lives in you/us, *God will also make your/our bodies, which now are sure to die, live again after you/we die*. God, who caused Christ to live again after he died, will make you/us live again by *causing his Spirit, who lives within you/us, to do it*.

Romans 8:12-13

THEME: *We are compelled to live as the Spirit directs, not as our self-directed nature directs, because if we do the latter we will be eternally separated from God, but if we cease doing the latter we will live eternally.*

¹²Therefore, my fellow believers, we must *live as the Spirit directs us*. What we do not have to do is to live as our self-directed nature *guides us*. ¹³If you live the way your self-directed nature *directs*, you will surely not live *eternally* (OR, will surely be eternally separated from God). But if by *the power of God's Spirit* you quit doing the *sinful* things that your bodies *desire* [MET], you will live eternally.

Romans 8:14-17

THEME: *Because we who allow the Spirit of God to guide us are God's children, we will also inherit eternal blessings from God.*

¹⁴We who are guided by the **Spirit of God** {allow the **Spirit of God** to guide us} are God's children. ¹⁵*You have showed that this is true*, because you received *from God* a Spirit that is not one that makes you fear *God* again. You are not like slaves who *fear their masters* [MET]. On the contrary, we have received a Spirit by whose *work in our hearts* God has adopted us. The Spirit now enables us to cry out *to God*, "*You(sg) are my Father* [DOU]!" ¹⁶The Spirit himself confirms what our spirits say, that we are God's children. ¹⁷Because we are *God's children*, we also will some day receive/inherit *eternal blessings/privileges*. We will receive/inherit them from God, and we will *also* receive/inherit *them* just like Christ has *inherited them*. But we must suffer *for doing good* as Christ did, in order to receive splendor as he did.

Romans 8:18-25

THEME: *Since everything that God has created is eagerly awaiting the time when he will reveal who are his true children, I consider that what we suffer now is not worth paying attention to.*

¹⁸I consider that what we suffer during the present time is not worth *paying attention to*, because the future splendor/glorious that will be revealed {that *God* will reveal} to us *is so great*. ¹⁹The *things that God* has created are very eagerly waiting for *the time* [PRS, DOU] when God will reveal who his *true children* are. ²⁰*God* caused the things that he created to be unable to achieve *what he had purposed*. That was not because they wanted to *be unable to do that*. On the contrary, *God* made them that way because he wanted them to keep confidently expecting ²¹that the things that *he* created will be freed {that *he* will free the things that *he* created} from their sure decay [MET]. *He* will free them in order that *he can give them* the same glory that belongs to his children. ²²We know that until now *it is as though* all *things* that God created have been groaning together, *and they long for that glory, just like a mother having the pains before bearing a child* groans and longs for *her baby's birth* [MET]. ²³Not only *do those things groan*, but we ourselves also groan inwardly. We who have *God's Spirit*, who is like a partial gift [MET] we have received as we wait for *the future glory, groan inwardly*. We groan while we wait eagerly for the time when we will receive our *full rights* as God's adopted children. That *will include* his freeing our bodies *from the things that hinder us on earth*. *He will do this by giving us new bodies*. ²⁴Ever since we were saved {since *God* saved us}, we have continued to confidently expect *that future glory*. If we had what we waited for, we would not *need to wait* for it any longer, because those who have something, <certainly do not continue to wait for it!/will they continue to wait for it?> [RHQ] ²⁵But because we keep waiting expectantly to receive what we do not yet have, we wait for it eagerly and patiently/perseveringly.

Romans 8:26-27

THEME: *God's Spirit helps us when our spirits feel weak; he prays for us and God understands what his Spirit intends.*

²⁶Similarly, in addition to our continuing to wait for what God will give us, God's Spirit helps us when our spirits feel weak. We do not know what is proper/necessary for us to pray. But God's Spirit knows, and he prays for us when we groan (OR, he groans) in a way that cannot be expressed in words (OR, prays with us, groaning in a way that cannot be expressed in words). ²⁷God, who examines our inner feelings, understands what his Spirit desires/intends. What God understands is that his Spirit prays for us who belong to God exactly as God wants him to pray.

Romans 8:28-30

THEME: *God works out all things in a way that produces good spiritual benefits for us who love him. He does this because, having known that we would be saved and thus we would have the character of his Son, he chose us and declared us righteous, and he will surely give us future splendor.*

²⁸And we know that to those/us who love God, he works out **all things** that happen *to them/us* in a way that produces good *spiritual benefits for us*. He does this for those/us whom he has chosen, because that was (OR, was according to) what he planned to do. ²⁹God knew previously *that we would believe* in him (OR, *would be saved*). We are those who God also decided previously would have a character like his Son's character. The result of that is that *Christ is like* a firstborn/highest-ranking *son*, and *those/we who are God's children* [MET] are *like* [MET] many *younger brothers of Jesus*. ³⁰And us who God decided previously *that we would be like his Son* he also summoned. And for us whom he summoned, he also erased the record of our sins. And for us whose record of sins he has erased, he also will surely give future splendor.

Romans 8:31-39

THEME: *We must conclude from these things that no one can prevail against us, and absolutely no one and nothing can separate us from Christ's loving us and God's loving us.*

³¹ So <I will tell you what we must conclude from *all* these things that God does for us./what shall we conclude from *all* these things that God does for us?> [RHQ] Because God *is acting* on our behalf, <no one can win against us!/can anyone prevail against us? (OR, it does not matter if anyone opposes us)!> [RHQ] ³² God did not spare even **his very own Son**. Instead, he turned him over *to others to cruelly kill him* in order that all we *who believe in him* may benefit *from his dying for us*. Therefore, because God did that, <he will also certainly give us freely everything that we need to live for him, in addition to giving us Christ./will he not also certainly give us freely everything that we need to live for him, in addition to giving us Christ?> [RHQ] ³³ It is God himself who erases the record of our sins. So <no one who accuses us before God will win against us (OR, it does not matter if anyone tries to accuse us) whom God has chosen./is it possible that anyone who accuses us before God will win against us (OR, does it matter if anyone tries to accuse us) whom God has chosen?> [RHQ] ³⁴ It is Christ Jesus himself who pleads *with God* for us, so <no one can condemn us (OR, say that we are still guilty for our sin)./can anyone condemn us (OR, say that we are still guilty for our sin)?> [RHQ] Christ died *for us*, but he was also raised {God also raised him} from the dead, and he is now at the place of honor *ruling* with God [MTY]. ³⁵ <Absolutely no one and nothing can cause Christ to stop loving us!/Can anyone or anything cause Christ to stop loving us?> [RHQ] That could not [RHQ] happen *because someone* afflicted us [DOU], or *because someone did things* to harm us, or *because we did not* have anything to eat, or *because we did not* have enough clothes, or *because we lived in a dangerous situation*, or *because someone killed us with a sword* [MTY] (OR, murdered us). ³⁶ *Such things may happen to us, just like it is written {as David wrote} that David said to God, "Because we are your(sg) people, other people repeatedly attempt to kill us. They consider that we are only people to be killed, like a butcher considers that sheep are only animals to be slaughtered [MET]."* ³⁷ But even though all these bad things *may happen to us*, we win completely/triumphantly *over these things because Christ*, who loves us, *helps us*. ³⁸ I am completely convinced {absolutely certain} that neither being dead (OR, being killed), nor *what happens to us while we live*, nor angels, nor demons, nor present events, nor future events, nor powerful *beings/forces*, ³⁹ nor *powerful beings* above the horizon or below the horizon [MTY], nor anything else that God has created can cause God to stop loving us. *God showed us that he loves us by sending Jesus Christ our Lord to die for us.*

Romans 9:1-5

THEME: *I tell you very sincerely that I grieve greatly about most of my fellow Israelites having rejected Christ. I would be willing to be separated from Christ if that would help them believe in him.*

9 ¹ Now I would like to discuss the fact that most of my fellow Israelites have rejected Christ. Because of my relationship with Christ, I say completely truthfully *what I will now tell you*. I am not lying [DOU]! My conscience confirms what I say because the Holy Spirit *controls it*. ² I tell you that I grieve very greatly and deeply [DOU] *about my fellow Israelites*. ³ I personally would be willing to let God curse me *and, as a result, be separated from Christ if that would help my fellow Israelites, my natural kinsmen, to believe in Christ*. ⁴ We Jews are *Israelites, God's chosen descendants of Jacob*. God has always considered us as his children [MET]. It was to our ancestors *that he used to appear gloriously while they were in the desert*. It was with them that God made covenants *several times*. It was to them *that God gave the laws at Mount Sinai*. They were the ones *to whom God showed how they should worship him*. They were the ones *to whom God promised many things, especially that the Messiah would come from their race*. ⁵ It was our ancestors, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom God chose to found our nation*. And, *most importantly*, it was from us Israelites that the Messiah received his human nature. *Nevertheless, most of my fellow Israelites have rejected Christ, who is the one who controls all things! He is God, the one who is worthy that we praise him forever! This is true! (OR, Amen!)*

Romans 9:6-13

THEME: *This does not prove that God has failed to do for Abraham what he promised, because, as Scripture illustrates, it is not all who are naturally descended from Jacob or Abraham whom God considers to be his children, but it is those who were born as a result of what God promised whom he considers his children.*

⁶ God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that their descendants would all inherit his blessings. But although most of my fellow Israelites have rejected Christ, that does not prove that God has failed to do the things that he promised, because it is not all who are descended from Jacob and who call themselves the people of Israel whom God considers to be truly his people. ⁷ And it is also not all of Abraham's natural descendants that God considers to be his people. Instead, God considers only some of them to be Abraham's children. This agrees with what God told Abraham: "It is Isaac, not any of your(sg) other sons, whom I will consider to be the true father of your descendants." ⁸ That means that it is not all the natural-born descendants of Abraham whom God considers as his children. Instead it is those who were born as a result of believing what God promised whom he considers to be his children. ⁹ You know that what God promised to Abraham was this: "About this time next year Sarah your wife will bear a son as a result of my enabling [MTY] her." So Abraham knew that it was not through Ishmael, the son that he already had, that God would fulfill what he had promised him (OR, that his true descendants would come). ¹⁰ And not only then did God show that he did not determine who would be his true children according to who their ancestors were. He showed it again when Rebecca conceived twins by our ancestor Isaac.

¹¹⁻¹² Before the twins, Jacob and Esau, were born, when neither one had yet done anything good or bad, God said to Rebecca about the twins she was to bear, “The older one shall later serve the younger one, contrary to normal custom.” God said this in order that we might clearly understand that **what he purposed for people** was according to what he himself determined. That is, people’s *eternal destiny* does not depend on what they do. Instead, their destiny depends on God, the one who chooses them. ¹³ And this teaching is <supported/shown to be true> by what is written in the Scriptures [what a prophet recorded] that God said: “I favored Jacob, the younger son. I did not favor [HYP] Esau, the older son.”

Romans 9:14-18

THEME: As the Scriptures indicate, God’s choosing people depends not on their wishes or efforts. He helps whomever he wants to help, and he makes stubborn whomever he wants to make stubborn. We cannot conclude that God is unjust in choosing the ones he wants to choose.

¹⁴ Someone might say, “<Is God unjust by choosing the ones he wants to choose?/I think that God is unjust by choosing the ones he wants to choose!>” [RHQ] I would reply, “He is certainly not unjust!” ¹⁵ God told Moses, “I will pity and help anyone whom I choose [DOU]!” ¹⁶ So God chooses people, not because they want God to choose them or because they try hard to do things so that he will accept them. Instead he chooses people because he himself has mercy on undeserving ones. ¹⁷ Moses recorded [PRS] that God had told Pharaoh, “This is why I gave you(sg) authority [MTY]: It was in order that I might show by how I oppose you how exceedingly powerful I am, and in order that people everywhere [HYP] would hear about me [MTY].” ¹⁸ So we conclude that God kindly helps the ones he wants to act kindly towards. But he makes stubborn the ones such as Pharaoh that he wants to make stubborn.

Romans 9:19-29

THEME: My reply to anyone’s objection to this doctrine is that God has a right to carry out his purposes; he tolerated the people who caused him to be angry, in order that he might disclose how gloriously he acts toward those on whom he intends to have mercy.

¹⁹ One of you may object to this by saying to me, “Because God determines ahead of time everything that people do, that also implies that he wants us to do everything that we do. <No one has resisted what God has willed!/Who has resisted what God has willed?> [RHQ] Therefore, <it would not be right that God would still condemn a person for having sinned!/why does God still condemn a person for having sinned?> [RHQ]” ²⁰ I would reply that since you(sg) are just a human being, <you do not have any right at all to criticize God!/who are you to say that what God does is wrong?> [RHQ] As a potter is the one who creates a clay pot, God is the one who created you. <A clay pot [MET] certainly would not have a right to criticize the potter by asking [PRS], “Why did you(sg) make me this way?/Would a clay pot have a right to criticize the potter by asking [PRS], “Why did you(sg) make me this way?> [RHQ]” ²¹ Instead, <the potter certainly has the right to take some clay and from one lump of clay make one pot that people will honor and make another one for ordinary purposes [MET]./does not a potter have the right to take some clay and from one lump of clay make one pot that people will honor and make another pot for ordinary purposes?> [MET, RHQ] Similarly, God has the right to carry out what he purposes for people. ²² Although God desires to show that he is angry about sin, and although he desires to make clear that he can powerfully punish people who have sinned, he tolerated very patiently the people [MET] who caused him to be angry and who deserved to be destroyed (OR, who were made to be destroyed). ²³ God has been patient in order that he might make clear how very wonderfully he acts toward those [MET] whom he intended to act mercifully towards and whom he prepared ahead of time in order that they might live gloriously in heaven. ²⁴ That means us whom he chose—not only us Jews but also non-Jews. ²⁵ These words that Hosea wrote [MTY] that God said also <show that God has the right/support God’s right> to choose from among both Jews and non-Jews [MTY]:

I will declare that many people who were not my people are now my people. I will declare that many people whom I did not love [HYP] before, I love now.

²⁶ And another prophet wrote:

What will happen is that in the places where God told them before, “You are not my people,” in those same places people will declare truthfully that they are children of God, who is completely powerful.

²⁷ Isaiah also exclaimed concerning the Israelites:

Even though the Israelites are so many that no one can count them, like sand particles beside the ocean, only the small part of them will be saved {God will save only the small part of them}, ²⁸ because the Lord will punish completely and speedily the people who live in that land, as he said that he would do.

²⁹ Also, we can understand from what the prophet Isaiah said that God would not save anyone if he did not show mercy,

If the Lord, who controls everything in heaven, had not mercifully allowed some of our descendants to survive, we would have become like the people of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, who were [SIM, DOU] completely destroyed.

Romans 9:30-33

THEME: The non-Jews found the way by which God could declare them righteous. The Jews did not succeed in fulfilling what the Mosaic laws require. Instead, they tried to find a way to be declared righteous by doing things in order that God would accept them.

³⁰ <We must conclude this:/What shall we conclude?> [RHQ] Although non-Jews did not search out a way by which God would erase the record of their sins, they found that way because they trusted in what Christ did for them. ³¹ But although

the people of Israel sought a basis by which God would erase the record of their sins, they did not succeed in fulfilling the true purpose of the laws that God gave to Moses.³² The reason [RHQ] that they did not succeed is that they did not trust that God would provide a way to save them. Instead, they were trying to do certain things in order that God would accept them. Because they did not expect the Messiah to die, the Israelites felt disgusted concerning Jesus' death, which is like the stone [MET] on which people stumble.³³ This is what a prophet predicted when he wrote these words that God said about the Messiah:

Listen! I am placing in Israel [MTY] one who is like a stone [MET] on which people will stumble. What he does will offend people [DOU]. Nevertheless, those who believe in him will not be disappointed.

Romans 10:1-4

THEME: My deep desire and earnest prayer is that God will save the Jews, who do not understand how to seek him correctly.

10¹ My fellow believers, what I deeply desire and what I pray to God earnestly for is that he will save *my own people, the Jews*.² I declare truthfully about them that although they <zealously seek/very much want to know> God, they do not understand *how to seek/know him correctly*.³ They did not <submit themselves to/accept> the way that **God** erases the record of people's sins. They did not *want to recognize that way* because they wanted him to do it **their own** way.⁴ They wanted God to erase the record of their sins as *a result of their obeying his laws*. *But* because of what Christ has done, it is no longer necessary for *people to obey the laws God gave Moses in order for the record of their sins to be erased*. Now God will erase the record of sins of everyone who trusts *in what Christ has done*.

Romans 10:5-13

THEME: The message of Scripture is that those who confess publicly that Jesus is their Lord and who believe inwardly that God raised Jesus from the dead will be saved, because God accepts people only because of their faith, Jews and non-Jews alike.

⁵ In regard to *the old way*, Moses wrote *concerning people who obey God's laws*, "It is the people who have done *perfectly* the things that the laws require who will gain *eternal life* by *doing* them."⁶ But those whose record of sins God has erased as a result of their believing *in Christ* can say to anyone [PRS] as *Moses said*, "You should not *critically* say inwardly, '<Someone will have to go up and enter heaven!/Who will go up and enter heaven?>' [RHQ]" That is to say, someone will have to *go up and bring Christ down to bring the message of salvation to us!*⁷ "Or you should not say inwardly, '<Someone will have to go down and enter the place where the spirits of dead persons are!/Who will go down and enter the place where the spirits of dead persons are?>' [RHQ]" That is to say, someone will have to *go down and bring Christ up from there to bring the message of salvation to us*. You should not say that because *Christ has already come down to save us, and has already risen from the dead!*⁸ But instead, those who believe *in Christ* [PRS] can say what [RHQ] *Moses also said*, "You(sg) can find out about *God's message* very easily. You can speak [MTY] about it; you can think [MTY] about it." This is the message that we proclaim, that people must believe *in Christ*.⁹ *This message is that* if anyone of you confesses/says publicly that Jesus is Lord, and if you(sg) believe inwardly that God raised him <from the dead/after he died>, you will be saved {God will save you}.¹⁰ If people believe **inwardly** that *Christ died and that God caused him to become alive again* [CHI], the result is that *God will erase the record of their sins*. And for those who state/declare **publicly** that *Jesus is their Lord*, the result is that *God will save them*.¹¹ *It is written* {Isaiah wrote} in the Scriptures [PRS] *about the Messiah*, "**Whoever** believes in him will not be disappointed."¹² *God* treats the Jews and the non-Jews similarly. Because he is the same Lord for all people *who believe in him*, he abundantly *blesses* all who ask him to *help/save them*.¹³ This is *just like what the prophet Joel wrote*: "All those who ask the Lord God to save them will be saved {The Lord God will save all those who ask him to save them}."

Romans 10:14-17

THEME: There may be those who object by saying, "If God does not send someone to preach to the Jews, they cannot ask Christ to save them." My reply to them is that God has sent people to preach about Christ to them, but most of the Jews have not accepted the gospel. However, some Jews do believe in Christ, and many other people are indeed hearing the message.

¹⁴ In regard to the people of Israel rejecting the gospel, some people might object by saying, (OR, This raises another problem about the Jews:) "<They certainly cannot ask *Christ to help/save them* if they have not *first* believed *in him!*/How can they ask *Christ to help/save them* if they have not *first* believed *in him?*> [RHQ] And <they certainly cannot believe *in him* if they have not heard about him!/how can they believe *in him* if they have not heard about him?> [RHQ] And <they certainly cannot hear *about him* if someone does not preach to them *about him!*/how can they hear *about him* if someone does not preach to them *about him?*> [RHQ]¹⁵ And those who preach to them *about Christ*, <certainly cannot preach if they are not sent *by God* {if *God* does not send them} *to preach!*/how can they preach if they are not sent *by God* {if *God* does not send them} *to preach?*> [RHQ] *His sending messengers to them would be* just like it is written {like someone wrote} in the Scriptures, 'The arrival [MTY] of those who preach the good message is wonderful!'"¹⁶ *I would reply in this way to people who say such things: God has indeed sent people to preach the message about Christ*. But not all the people of Israel have paid attention to the good message! *It is like what Isaiah said when he felt very discouraged*, "Lord, <it seems as if hardly anyone believed what they heard us(exc) preach!/has anyone believed what they heard us(exc) preach?> [RHQ]"¹⁷ So then, *I tell you that people are* believing *in Christ* as a result of hearing *the message about him*, and people **are** hearing *the message* as a result of *people preaching about Christ!*

Romans 10:18-21

THEME: *In reply to a query of whether the Jews have heard or understood about Christ, I would say that, as is supported by the Scriptures, they have heard it and should have understood it, because even the non-Jews, who were not searching for God, understood it.*

¹⁸ But if someone were to ask, "Have not the people of Israel heard the message about God?" I would reply that they certainly have heard! It is like what is written in the Psalms,

The people living all over the world [PRS, MTY] have seen the stars, and what they indicate about God's character has reached people living in the most remote places in the world [DOU]!

¹⁹ But someone might ask, "Is it true that the people of [MTY] Israel understood the message about Christ?" I would reply that certainly they understood it, but they rejected it! Remember that Moses was the first one who warned the people of Israel about disobeying God. He told them that God said,

You consider that the non-Jewish groups are not nations at all [CHI]. But some of them will believe in me, and I will bless them. Then you will envy them. I will cause you to be angry with those people whom you Jews think do not understand my ways [IRO].

²⁰ Remember also what God said very boldly to Isaiah:

*The non-Jews who did not <try to know/seek> me will surely find me [DOU]!
I will surely reveal what I am like to those who did not ask for me!*

²¹ But concerning the people of Israel, Isaiah tells us that God said:

I have for a long time held out my arms to the people who disobeyed and rebelled against me, in order to invite them to return to me.

Romans 11:1-6

THEME: *God has certainly not rejected all Jews. I am evidence of that. Just like in the past, there is also at the present time a small group of us Jews who have become believers.*

11 ¹ Because of that, if anyone should ask, "Has God rejected his people the Jews?" I would declare that he certainly has not rejected all of us! You can realize that by remembering that I also belong to the people of Israel. I am a descendant of Abraham, and I belong to the tribe of Benjamin, but God has not rejected me! ² No, God has not rejected his people, whom he chose long ago to be people whom he would bless in a special way. Remember [RHQ] what is written [PRS] in the Scriptures about Elijah when he mistakenly complained to God about the people of Israel, saying: ³ "Lord, they have killed the rest of your(sg) prophets, they have destroyed your altars. I am the only one who believes in you who remains alive, and now they are trying to kill me!" ⁴ God answered him like this: "You(sg) are not the only one who believes in me! I have protected for myself not just you, but 7000 other men who have not worshipped the false god Baal. <Remember that!/Do you not remember that?> [RHQ]" ⁵ So, similarly, there is also at this time a small group of us Jews who have become believers. God has chosen us to become believers (OR, his people) only because he acts kindly toward us, in ways that we do not deserve. ⁶ Since it is because he acts kindly toward those whom he chooses, it is not because they have done good things that he has chosen them. If God chose people because they did good deeds, then it would not be because he was acting toward them in a way that they did not deserve.

Romans 11:7-10

THEME: *The Scriptures confirm that the people of Israel as a whole did not find the way of being declared righteous, although those whom God had chosen did find it.*

⁷ Since God chose only some people of Israel, <this is what I conclude:/what shall we conclude?> [RHQ] Most of the people of Israel did not find the way for him to erase the record of their sins, even though some of them were earnestly looking for it. The people of Israel whom God had chosen found it, but the rest of them were {God} made spiritually insensitive/unresponsive. ⁸ Our fellow Jews are just like the ones about whom Isaiah wrote,

*God <caused their senses to be dull/made them unable to think clearly>. Up to this very day, they have eyes but they cannot see spiritually. [MET]
They have ears, but they cannot understand spiritually.*

⁹ And they remind me of what King David said, when he asked God to cause his enemies' senses to be dull [MET],
Make them stupid [MTY], like animals that are caught in snares!

May they feel secure because of the things that they enjoy but which will catch them like a trap [DOU, MET], with the result that you will destroy them.

¹⁰ May their ability to perceive danger be dulled {Dull their ability to perceive spiritually} [MET], with the result that they will not become alarmed [MET] when there is danger.

May you cause them to carry heavy loads on their backs continually as slaves do [MTY].

Romans 11:11-12

THEME: *My reply to a query as to whether the result of the Jews' unbelief is a permanent falling away from God is, "No! God is saving many non-Jews to make the Jews envious and thus seek to be saved."*

¹¹ Perhaps someone will ask, "When the Jews sinned by not believing in Christ, did it result in their separating themselves from God permanently?" Then I would reply, No, they have certainly not separated themselves from God permanently! What is happening is that because they sinned, God is saving non-Jews in order to cause the Jews to envy the way he blesses non-Jews and so ask Christ to save them. ¹² When the Jews sinned (OR, rejected Christ), the result was that God abundantly blessed the other people in [MTY] the world by offering them the opportunity to believe. And when the Jews failed spiritually, the result was that God abundantly blessed the non-Jews. Since that is true, think how wonderful it will be when the complete number of the Jews whom God has chosen will believe in Christ [RHQ]!

Romans 11:13-16

THEME: *I highly esteem the work that God has called me to do as an apostle among you non-Jews. I hope that I will make my fellow Jews jealous, and as a result, some of them will be saved.*

¹³ Now it is to you non-Jews that I am saying what follows. I am the one who is the apostle to **non-Jews**, and I highly esteem this work that God appointed me to do. ¹⁴ But I also hope that by my labors I will make my fellow Jews <jealous/want what you non-Jews have>, with the result that some of them will believe and thus be saved. ¹⁵ God has rejected most of my fellow Jews because they refused to believe, with the result that he reconciled many other people in the world [MTY] to himself. But he will accept my fellow Jews again when they trust in Christ! And <this is what the result will be./do you know what the result will be?> [RHQ] It will be as though God is making them alive again after they have been dead! ¹⁶ Just like the whole lump of dough will belong to God if people offer to God [MET] the bread baked from the first part of it [MET], so the Jews will belong to God because their ancestors belonged to God. And just like the branches of a tree will be good if the root is good [MET], so the descendants of our great Jewish ancestors who belonged to God will also someday belong to God.

Romans 11:17-24

THEME: *You non-Jews who trust in Jesus must not despise the Jews whom God has rejected. You must not become proud, but instead beware. God will not spare you if you fall away from him, and he will certainly act kindly toward the Jews if they trust in Christ.*

¹⁷ God has rejected many of the Jews [MET], like branches of a tree are broken off {like people break off dead branches of a tree}. And each of you non-Jews whom God has accepted is like [MET] a branch of a wild/uncultivated olive tree that was {that someone} grafted among the branches (OR, onto one of the branches) that were left on a cultivated olive tree. God has caused you to benefit from how he blessed our(exc) first Jewish ancestors, as branches benefit from the nutritious sap from the root of a cultivated olive tree [MET]. ¹⁸ However, you non-Jews must not despise the Jews whom God rejected [MET], who are like the branches that were broken off from the tree! If any of you wants to boast about having received blessings from God, remember this: Branches do not nourish a root. Instead the root nourishes the branches. [MET] Similarly, you are blessed by God because of what you have received from the Jews! It is not what the Jews have received from you that blesses them [MET]! ¹⁹ If one of you then says, "God rejected the Jews [MET] like branches [MET] that are broken {that people broke} off a tree and rejected, in order that he might accept us non-Jews, as branches [MET] of a tree are grafted in {as people graft in branches of a tree}," ²⁰ I would reply that this is true. However, it is because the Jews did not believe in Christ that they were rejected [MET] {that God rejected [MET] them}. As for you, it is only because you believe in Christ that God has accepted you! So do not any of you become proud, but instead beware of what could happen to you! ²¹ Since God did not spare the unbelieving Jews [MET] who were like a tree's **natural branches**, he will not spare any of you if you do not keep trusting in him!

²² Note then, that God acts kindly, but he also acts severely. He has acted severely toward the Jews who have stopped <trusting in/obeying> him. On the other hand, he acts kindly toward each of you non-Jews only if you continue to appreciate his acting kindly toward you. However, you will be rejected {he will reject you} if you do not keep trusting in him.

²³ And if the Jews believe in Christ [LIT], God also will reunite them to himself as branches are grafted {as people graft branches} into a tree again, because God is able to do that. ²⁴ Each of you non-Jews who were previously separated from God has benefited from the ways in which God blessed the Jews [MET]. That is like taking branches that have been cut {that someone has cut} from a wild olive tree that just grew without being planted {someone planting it} and, contrary to what people usually do, grafting them into a cultivated olive tree. So God will much more readily receive back the Jews because they belonged to him before [MET]! That will be like the original branches that had been cut off being grafted {like grafting the original branches that someone cut off,} back into the olive tree to which they originally belonged!

Romans 11:25-33

THEME: *I want you to know that all the people of Israel will some day be saved, as the Scriptures say will happen. God still loves them because of their ancestors. It is his purpose to act mercifully towards them as well as toward all non-Jews.*

²⁵ My non-Jewish fellow believers, I certainly want you to understand [LIT] this truth that God has now revealed *about my fellow Jews who are refusing to believe*. You should not proudly think *that God now favors you more than the Jews* (OR, *that you understand God's further plans for the Jews*). Many people of Israel will continue to be stubborn until **all the non-Jews whom God has chosen have believed in Jesus**. ²⁶ And then all [HYP] *the people of Israel will be saved* {God will save all [HYP] *the people of Israel*}. Then these words that are written {that a prophet wrote} *in the Scriptures will <become true/be fulfilled>*:

The one who sets *his people* free will originate from *the place where God dwells* (OR, from the Jews) [MTY]. Then he will remove the guilt of the Israelite people (OR, descendants of Jacob) [MTY].

²⁷ And as God says,

The contract that I will make with them is that I will forgive their sins.

²⁸ With regard to *the Jews rejecting the good message about Christ, God treats* them as enemies, which has benefited you non-Jews. But in regard to *their being the people whom God chose, God still* loves them because of *what he promised* their ancestors. ²⁹ *He still loves them*, because he never changed his mind about the privileges/blessings he *gave to them* and about his choosing *them to be his people*. ³⁰ You non-Jews once disobeyed God, but now he has acted mercifully towards you because the Jews disobeyed him. ³¹ Similarly, now they have disobeyed God. The result is that by the very same way in which he acted mercifully towards you, he will act mercifully towards them *again*. ³² God has declared and proved that all people, *both Jews and non-Jews* [MET], disobey *<him/his laws>*. He has declared that because he wants to act mercifully towards **us all**.

Romans 11:33-36

THEME: *I marvel at how great God's wisdom and knowledge are, and his decisions and actions toward us!*

³³ *I marvel* how vast and great are the wise things that God *has done* and what he has *always* known [DOU]! We are completely unable to understand the things that he has decided and the ways *in which he acts toward us* [DOU]!

³⁴ *I remember the Scriptures that say,*

<No one has known what the Lord thinks./Who has known what the Lord thinks?> [RHQ] <Absolutely no one has given him advice *about what he should do!*/Who has advised him *about what he should do?*> [RHQ]

³⁵ And,

<No one has given anything to God that *he did not previously receive from God!*/Has anyone given anything to God that *he did not previously receive from God?*> [RHQ] So God <is not obligated to/does not have to> pay back anything to anyone!

³⁶ *God is the one who created* all things. He is also the one who *sustains all things*. The reason that he created them was that *everything he created might praise him*. May *all people* honor him forever! <May it be so!/Amen!>

Romans 12:1-2

THEME: *I appeal to you that you present yourselves to God by making yourselves like living sacrifices, which is the appropriate way to serve him. Do not let anything non-Christian determine how you act, but instead let God change your way of thinking.*

12 ¹ My fellow believers, since God has acted mercifully *toward you* in so many ways, I appeal to *all of you* that you present yourselves [SYN] *to him by making yourselves like* holy sacrifices [MET]. *Make yourselves sacrifices* that he is pleased with, sacrifices that are living/alive, *not ones that are dead/killed*. *Since God has done so much for you/us*, this is the *only* appropriate way to serve him. ² Do not let anything non-Christian determine how you should act. Instead, let God change your *way of life* by making your way of thinking new, in order that you may know what he wants you to do. That is, you will know what is good, and you will know what pleases God, and you will know how to be all that he wants you to be.

Romans 12:3-8

THEME: *Do not think about yourselves more highly than you should. Instead, think about yourselves sensibly, in a way that corresponds to the abilities that God has given to you because you trust in Christ. May we do diligently and cheerfully what God has given us ability to do.*

³ Because God has kindly appointed me *to be his apostle*, which I did not deserve, I say this to every one of you: Do not let what you think about yourselves exceed what is right for you to think! Instead, think *about yourselves* in a sensible way that *corresponds to the abilities* that God has given you *because you trust in Christ*. ⁴ Although a person has one body, it consists of many parts. All of the parts are needed for *the body*, but they do not all function the same way. ⁵ Similarly we, *although we are many*, are *united into one group* because of our relationship with Christ, and we belong to one another. So *no one should act as though he is needed by God more than the others!* ⁶ *Instead*, since each one of us can do various

things that differ according to the abilities that *God has given to us, we should do them diligently and cheerfully!* Those whom *God has enabled* to speak messages from him *should speak* what corresponds to what they believe *God told them*.⁷ *Those whom God has enabled to serve others* should do that. *Those whom God has enabled to teach his truth* should do that.⁸ *Those whom God has enabled to encourage/exhort his people* should do that. Those who share *their goods/money with others* should do it sincerely/generously. Those who govern *<the congregation/others>* should do it wholeheartedly. Those who help the needy should do it cheerfully.

Romans 12:9-18

THEME: *Love others sincerely in the various ways in which you act toward them.*

⁹ *The way you must love people is to love them sincerely!* Hate what is evil! Continue to eagerly do what *God considers to be good!*¹⁰ Love one another as members of the same family do; and in regard to honoring one another, you should be *<the first ones/eager>* to do it!¹¹ Do not be lazy. *Instead, be eager to serve God! Be enthusiastic as you serve the Lord!*¹² Rejoice because you are confidently awaiting *what God will do for you!* When you suffer, be patient! Keep praying and never give up!¹³ If any of God's people lacks anything, share with them *what you have!* Readily take care of *travelers who need a place to stay!*¹⁴ Ask God to be kind to those who *<persecute you/cause you to suffer>* *because you believe in Jesus!* Ask him to be kind to them; do not ask him to cause bad things to happen to them.¹⁵ If someone is joyful, you should rejoice also! If someone is sad, you should also be sad!¹⁶ Desire for others what you desire for yourselves (OR, Live harmoniously with each other!) Do not do things because you want to be *famous!* Instead, be content to do *tasks that others consider that only unimportant people do* (OR, *to associate with unimportant people*). Do not consider yourselves wise.¹⁷ Do not do evil deeds to anyone *who has done evil to you*. Act in a way that all people will recognize as good!¹⁸ Live peacefully with other people whenever it is possible, to the extent that you *can control the situation*.

Romans 12:19-21

THEME: *Instead of avenging yourselves, allow God to avenge you; and instead of being overcome by evil done to you, overcome evil deeds by doing good to those who do evil to you, because this is what the Scriptures command.*

¹⁹ *My fellow believers* whom I love, do not do evil in return when people do evil to you! Instead, allow *God to punish them* [MTY], because it is {someone has} written *in the Scriptures that the Lord said*, "It is **my** responsibility to take revenge; I am the one who will punish *people who do evil to you* [DOU]," says the Lord."²⁰ Instead of *doing evil to those who have done evil to you, do as the Scriptures teach*: "If your(sg) enemies are hungry, feed them! If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. By doing that, you(sg) will cause them to feel ashamed and perhaps they will change their attitude toward you [IDM]." ²¹ Do not let evil deeds that others have done to you overcome you(sg) by making you do evil to them! [PRS] Instead, overcome their evil deeds by doing good deeds to them!

Romans 13:1-7

THEME: *Be subject to civil authorities, because those who oppose them oppose what God has established and will bring punishment on themselves. Do what is good and then they will commend you. Give to all the authorities what you are obligated to give to them.*

13 ¹ Every *believer* must be subject to civil officials. *Remember that God is the only one who gives officials their authority.* Furthermore, those officials that exist are ones who have been appointed by God {God has appointed}.² So whoever resists the officials is resisting what God has established. Furthermore, those who resist officials will bring on themselves *from the officials* the punishment that *God considers fitting*.³ What rulers do is not to cause people who do good deeds to be afraid. Instead, *what they do is to cause people who do evil to be afraid*. So, if any of you [RHQ] wants to be unafraid of officials, do what is good! *If you(sg) do good, they will commend you instead of punishing you!*⁴ It is in order to serve God *by doing their work that every official exists*, in order that they may benefit each of you. If any of you does what is evil, you(sg) *will rightfully have reason to be afraid*, because the authority that they have to punish people [MTY] is very real [LIT]! The officials exist **to serve God**. That is, they act as God's agents as they punish those who do evil.⁵ So, it is necessary for you(pl) to be subject to officials, not only because they will punish you [MTY] *if you disobey them*, but also because you know within yourselves *that you should be subject to them!*⁶ It is for this reason that you also pay taxes, because the officials are ones who serve God as they continually do their work.⁷ Give to all *the officials* what you are supposed to give to them! Pay taxes to *those who require that you pay taxes*. Pay duties on goods to those who require that you pay those duties. Respect *those who ought to be respected*. Honor *those who ought to be honored*.

Romans 13:8-10

THEME: *Do not leave any debt unpaid. Your only continual obligation is to love one another, because doing so fulfills all that God's law requires.*

⁸ Pay all of your debts *when you are supposed to pay them*. The only thing *that is like* a debt that you should never stop paying is to love one another. Whoever loves others has fulfilled all that *God requires in his laws*.⁹ *There are many things that God commanded in his laws, such as do not commit adultery, do not murder anyone, do not steal, and do not desire anything that belongs to someone else. But the command by which they are all summed up {that includes them all} is this:*

Each of you must love the people with whom you come in contact, just like you(sg) love yourself.¹⁰ If you love people with whom you come in contact [PRS], you will not do any evil to them [LIT]. So, whoever loves *others* fulfills all that God's laws require.

Romans 13:11-14

THEME: *Because it is time for us to be fully alert and active, we must quit doing wicked deeds. We must do those things that will help us resist that which is evil, we must live properly, and we must be like Christ.*

¹¹ Do what I have just told you, especially since you know *the significance of the time in which we are living*. You know that it is time for you to be *fully alert and active* [MET], *like people who have awakened from sleeping* [MET], because *the time when Christ will finally deliver us from this world's pain/sin and sorrow is near*. That time *<is closer than/was not so close>* when we first believed in Christ.¹² *Our time to live in this world* [MTY] *is almost ended* [MET], *like a night that is nearly ended*. The time *when Christ will return* [MTY] is near. So we must quit doing wicked deeds [MET] *such as people do in the darkness, and we must be doing the things that will help us resist Satan/evil* [MET], *as soldiers who put on their armor in the daytime get ready to resist their enemies*.¹³ We must behave properly, as though the time *when Christ will return* [MTY] *were already here*. We must not participate in drunken carousing [HEN]. We must not commit any kind of sexual immorality [MTY, DOU]. We must not quarrel. We must not be jealous of *other people*.¹⁴ On the contrary, you/we should be *like the Lord Jesus Christ so that others will see what he is like, just as people put on special clothes so that others will see what group they belong to* [MET]. You/We should stop thinking about *doing the things that your/our self-directed nature desires*.

Romans 14:1-4

THEME: *Accept those who are not sure whether they are permitted to do certain things. Anyone who thinks that it is all right to eat all kinds of food must not despise those who do not think that, and those who do not think that it is all right to eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, because God has accepted them.*

14¹ Accept those who are not sure *whether God will permit them to do certain things some people think are wrong*. But *when you accept them*, do not argue with them about *<what they think/their opinions>*.² Some people believe that they may eat all *kinds of food*. Others believe *that God does not want them to eat certain things*, so they believe that they may not eat meat.³ Anyone who *thinks that it is all right to eat all kinds of food* must not despise those who *think it is not all right to eat all kinds of food*. Anyone who *thinks it is not all right to eat all kinds of food* must not *<condemn/say that God will punish>* those who *think that it is all right to eat all kinds of food*, because God himself has accepted those people.⁴ *God is the master of us all, so <he is the one who will decide whether those people have done wrong!/who are you to decide whether they have done wrong?>* [RHQ] Therefore, you have no right [RHQ] to condemn those who eat everything, because they are *also God's servants!* And just like it is the servants' own master who accepts or condemns [MTY] his servants, *it is God who accepts or condemns us*. And *believers will be accepted by the Lord {the Lord will accept believers} regardless of whether they eat meat or not*, because he is able to keep them *trusting in him*.

Romans 14:5-9

THEME: *Each person should be fully convinced about observing special days, thinking and deciding for himself and not for others. We should try to please God by everything we do.*

⁵ Some people regard certain days as *holy* and think that the other *days* are not *holy*. Other people regard all days as *equally suitable for worshipping God*. Each person should be *<fully convinced/sure>* *about such matters*, thinking and deciding for himself *and not for others*.⁶ As for those who believe that they should worship on a *certain day of the week*, it is to *honor the Lord that they worship on that day*. And as for those who *think that it is all right to eat all kinds of food*, it is to *honor the Lord that they eat those foods*, as is clear from their thanking God *for the food that they eat*. As for those who abstain from *eating certain kinds of food*, it is to *honor the Lord that they do not eat those foods*, and they also thank God *for the food that they do eat*. *So doing either of those things is not wrong in itself*.⁷ None of us should live *merely to please ourselves*, and none of us *should choose when or how we will die, merely to please ourselves*.⁸ While we live, it is the Lord whom we belong to *and should be trying to please, and not just ourselves*. And when we die, it is the Lord whom we should *be trying to please*. So, while we live and also when we die, we should be trying to please the Lord to whom we belong, *not just ourselves*,⁹ because the very purpose for which Christ died and became alive again is that he might be Lord whom all people *should try to please*, both of those who have already died and of those who are still living.

Romans 14:10-12

THEME: *You should neither condemn nor despise your fellow believers who believe differently about religious regulations from what you do, because it is God who will say whether he approves of what we have done.*

¹⁰ **<It is disgraceful that you who practice certain religious regulations say that God will punish your fellow believers who do not practice those regulations!/Why do you who practice certain religious regulations say God will punish your fellow believers who do not practice such regulations?>** [RHQ] *I say this because the time will come when all of us will stand before God in order that he will say whether or not he approves [MTY] of what we have done*. So **you who do not practice**

such regulations, <should not despise your fellow believers *who practice them!*/why do you despise your fellow believers *who practice them?*> [RHQ] ¹¹ *We know this because it is written {a prophet/isaiah wrote} what God has said:*

Everyone will bow down before me! That is as *certain as the fact that I live* [IDM]! Everyone [SYN] will acknowledge *that because I am God, I have the right to judge and punish people!*

¹² *So it is clear that it is God who will decide whether or not he approves of what each of us has done.*

Romans 14:13-18

THEME: *Instead of condemning each other, decide not to do anything that might lead your fellow believer to sin by following your example and which would then cause others to speak evil of you.*

¹³ *Since it is God who will judge everyone, we must stop saying that God should punish some of our fellow believers! Instead, you/we should decide that you/we will not do anything that would be an example that might cause fellow believers to stop trusting in God [DOU].* ¹⁴ *I am absolutely certain [DOU] because of my close relationship with (OR, my belonging to) the Lord Jesus that there is nothing that by itself is wrong to eat. But if people think it is wrong to eat something, then to them it is wrong to eat it. So you should not encourage them to eat it.* ¹⁵ *If you eat food [MET] that anyone for whom Christ died thinks that it is wrong to eat, that person might be encouraged {you might be encouraging that person} to do something that he believes is wrong. As a result, you might cause that fellow believer to stop trusting in God. He would thus be ruined spiritually just because you have stopped behaving as one who loves others should behave!* ¹⁶ *Similarly, do not do something that you think is good if, as a result, your fellow believer would sin and then others would speak evil of you who say that you are Christians.* ¹⁷ *Letting God rule our lives [MET] does not mean that we must obey regulations about eating or drinking something! Instead, it means we must live righteously, act peacefully towards others, and be joyful by the power of the Holy Spirit.* ¹⁸ *Those who serve Christ by acting in such ways please God, and others will also respect them.*

Romans 14:19-23

THEME: *Try to do what will help fellow believers to be at peace with each other and to grow spiritually. Do not destroy what God has done in others' lives as a result of your eating certain things.*

¹⁹ *So we should always eagerly try to live in a way that will cause peace among fellow Christians, and we should try to do what will help each other to mature spiritually.* ²⁰ *Do not destroy what God has done in the life of any believer just because of your eating certain kinds of food [MET] which that person considers wrong to eat! God permits us to eat every kind of food. But if, by your eating certain kinds of food, you encourage another person to sin by doing what he believes is wrong, you are doing wrong.* ²¹ *It is good neither to eat meat nor to drink wine, nor to do anything else at any time if it will cause one of your fellow believers to stop trusting in God.* ²² *Let God tell you what things are right for you to do, but do not try to force others to accept what you believe. God is pleased with those who do what they know is right and as a result do not feel guilty concerning what they have done, because they have done only those things that they believe are right.* ²³ *But some believers are not certain that God will approve of their eating a certain kind of food. So if they eat it, they think that God will punish them. And they truly will be punished {God truly will punish them}, because they have done things that they believe are not right. Those who do anything without being certain that God considers it to be right are sinning.*

Romans 15:1-4

THEME: *We should not be irritated by the practices of those who are uncertain whether God will condemn them for doing certain things that the Mosaic laws forbid. Instead, we should do things that please our fellow Christians, because Christ has set us an example.*

15 ¹ *Most of us are sure that God will not punish us for doing certain things that the laws and rituals God gave Moses said the Jews should not do. But we should be patient with those who are uncertain about such things, and we should not let them irritate us. We should not simply please ourselves.* ² *Each of us should do the things that please the fellow believers with whom we come in contact, and things that will benefit them. We should do those things in order to help them mature spiritually.* ³ *We should please our fellow believers, since Christ has set us an example. He did not do things to please himself. On the contrary, he tried to please God even when others insulted him. That was as it is written {as someone/the Psalmist} wrote} in Scripture that the Messiah said to God: "When people insulted you(sg), it was as though they were also insulting me."* ⁴ *And you need to remember that what was written previously {what God's servants previously wrote} in the Scriptures, was written {they wrote} to teach us in order that we would be patient and be encouraged by reading/believing what they wrote. If we do that, we can confidently expect God to do for us all he has promised.*

Romans 15:5-6

THEME: *May God enable you all to live harmoniously with each other.*

⁵ God is the one who enables us to be patient and who encourages us. *I <ask/pray to> him that he would enable you all to live harmoniously with each other, doing as Christ Jesus did.* ⁶ Then, as you are united in what you think and say [MTY], you will praise God, *who is the heavenly father* [MET] of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:7-12

THEME: *Accept each other as Christ has accepted you, remembering that what Christ has done was both to help the Jews and to cause non-Jews to praise God.*

⁷ So I say to all of you believers at Rome, accept each other. *If you do that*, people will praise God as they see you thus behaving like Christ. Accept each other just like Christ accepted you! ⁸ I want you to remember that Christ helped us Jews [MTY] by what he did, in order to show that God <is faithful/does what he says he will do>. That is, *his coming as our Messiah* fulfilled what God promised to our Jewish ancestors. ⁹ And by acting mercifully to them, he also caused the non-Jews to praise him. *What he has done for the non-Jews* fulfills what is written in the Scriptures that David said to God: “So I will praise you(sg) when I am among the non-Jews, and I will sing to you [MTY].” ¹⁰ David also wrote, “Rejoice, you non-Jews, with us who are God’s people.” ¹¹ And Moses wrote in the Scriptures, “Praise the Lord, all you non-Jews, and may everyone praise him [DOU].” ¹² And Isaiah wrote in the Scriptures, “There will be a descendant [MET] of King David who will begin to rule the non-Jews. They will confidently expect him to fulfill what he has promised.”

Romans 15:13

THEME: *May God make you completely joyful and peaceful in order that you may have abundant hope.*

¹³ God is the one who causes you to be confidently expecting him to do what he has promised. *I pray/ask* that he will cause you to be completely joyful and peaceful as you trust in him. As you do that, the Holy Spirit will enable you to more and more confidently expect to receive what God has promised you.

Romans 15:14-16

THEME: *I have written frankly to you in this letter because of what God has kindly commissioned me to do among the non-Jews.*

¹⁴ My fellow believers, I myself am completely sure about you that you yourselves have acted toward others in a completely good way. You have done that because you have known completely all that God wants you to know [HYP] and because you are able to teach each other. ¹⁵ However, I have written to you quite frankly in this letter about some things in order to remind you about those things. *I have written this* because I have been appointed by God {God has appointed me}, which I did not deserve, ¹⁶ in order that I would work for Jesus Christ among the non-Jews. *God has appointed me* to act like a priest as I proclaim his good message in order that he will accept the non-Jews who believe in Christ. They will be like an offering [MET] to God as a result of their being dedicated to him by the Holy Spirit {the Holy Spirit dedicating them to God}.

Romans 15:17-21

THEME: *I am happy about my work for God that I have now completed in this region by proclaiming the gospel in places where people have not heard about Christ.*

¹⁷ It follows that, because of my relationship with (OR, because I belong to) Christ Jesus, I am happy about my work for God. ¹⁸ I will speak boldly only [LIT] about the work that Christ has enabled me to do. *I do that work* in order that non-Jews might pay attention to the message about Christ as a result of what I have said and done, ¹⁹ specifically, by my performing many powerful miracles [DOU]. *I have done those things* as a result of God’s Spirit powerfully enabling me. As a result of doing those things, while traveling all the way around from Jerusalem to Illyricum province, I have completed my work of proclaiming the message about Christ in those places. ²⁰ As I proclaim that message, I am always eagerly trying to proclaim it in places where people have not already heard about Christ. I do that in order that as I work for God I might not be continuing the work for him that someone else already started [MET]. *I do not want to be like a man who builds a house on someone else’s foundation.* ²¹ On the contrary, *I teach non-Jews, so that what happens may be like* what was written {the prophet Isaiah wrote} in the Scriptures about the Messiah: “Those who did not hear about him previously will perceive his truth. Truly, those who have not heard about him will hear and understand his message [DOU].”

Romans 15:22-29

THEME: *Because of this work, I have often been hindered from visiting you, but I hope to see you as I journey through your area and I hope that you will give me what I need for my next journey. But now I am about to go to Jerusalem to take funds to God’s people there. So later I will visit you in Rome, and I know that Christ will bless us there.*

²² Because I have attempted to preach the message about Christ in places where they have not heard about him, I have been hindered {things have hindered me} many times from being able to visit you. ²³ But now there are no more places in these regions where people have not heard about Christ. Furthermore, for several years I have wanted to visit you. ²⁴ So

I hope to go/come to see you. I hope to do that as soon as I am on my way to *the provinces in Spain*. I hope to see you as I journey through *your area*, and I hope that *by whatever you give me* [EUP] you will help me on my journey to Spain. But before *I go there*, I want to enjoy being with you for a little while, although *I would like to stay with you longer*.²⁵ But *I cannot visit you* now, because I am about to go to Jerusalem in order to take money [EUP] for God's people *there*.²⁶ *The believers in Macedonia and Achaia provinces* [MTY] decided to contribute some *money* [EUP] for those of God's people in Jerusalem who are poor.²⁷ They themselves decided *to do this, but* truly they owe something to God's people in Jerusalem. The non-Jewish *believers* benefited **spiritually** from Jewish *believers as a result of hearing the message about Christ from them*, so the non-Jews should also help the Jewish believers *in Jerusalem by giving them material things* (OR, **money**) [EUP].²⁸ So when I have finished this *task* by safely delivering all this money [MET, EUP] *that the believers in Macedonia and Achaia have given*, I will leave *Jerusalem and visit you in Rome while I am* on my way to Spain.²⁹ And I know that when I visit you, Christ will abundantly bless us (OR, enable *me* to bless you).

Romans 15:30-33

THEME: *I urge you to pray fervently that God will protect me from the unbelieving Jews in Judea and that God's people there will accept the money that I take to them, and also that I may be refreshed by visiting you. May God be with you all.*

³⁰ Because *we belong to* our Lord Jesus Christ and because the Spirit of God *causes us to love each other*, I urge you *all that you help me* by fervently/intensely praying to God for me.³¹ *Pray that* I will be protected {*that God will protect me*} so that the *Jews in Judea* who do not believe *the message about Christ will not harm me*. Also pray that God's people in Jerusalem will accept the money [EUP] that I *take to them*.³² Pray these things in order that I may go/come to you if God wants me to go/come, and that I may come joyfully, and that then God will refresh my *spirit as a result of my visiting/being with you*.³³ *I pray that* God, who *causes us to have inner peace*, will be with all of you *and will help you*. <May it be so!/Amen!>

Romans 16:1-2

THEME: *I am introducing and commending Phoebe to you, and I ask that you receive her as a fellow believer and that you give her whatever she needs.*

16¹ *By means of this letter* I am introducing and recommending to you our fellow believer Phoebe, *who will be taking this letter to you*. She is a deacon in the congregation in *Cenchrea city*.² *I request that* you receive her because of her relationship with the Lord. *You should do that because* those who are God's people ought to receive *their fellow believers*. *I am also requesting that* you help her *by giving her* [EUP] whatever she needs, because she has helped many people, including me.

Romans 16:3-16

THEME: *I send my greetings to many individuals among the believers there. All the congregations in this area also send their greetings to you.*

³ Tell Priscilla and *her husband* Aquila that I <send greetings to/am thinking fondly of> them. They worked with me for Christ Jesus,⁴ and they were even willing to die [IDM] in order *to save my life*. It is not only I who thank them for *helping me*, but the people in all [HYP] the non-Jewish congregations also *thank them for saving my life*.⁵ Also tell the congregation *that meets* in their house that I <send my greetings to/am thinking fondly of> them. Tell my dear friend Epaphroditus the same thing. He is the first man in *Asia province* who *believed* in Christ.⁶ Tell Mary, who has worked hard *for Christ* in order to *help* you, that I <send my greetings to/am thinking fondly of> her.⁷ Tell the same thing to Andronicus and *his wife* Junia (OR, and *his sister* Junia) who are my fellow Jews and who were also *previously* in prison with me. They are well-known/respected (OR, respected by the) apostles, and they became Christians before I did.⁸ I also send my greetings to Ampliatus, who is a dear friend because of his relationship with the Lord.⁹ I also send my greetings to Urbanus, who works for Christ with us, and to my dear friend Stachys.¹⁰ I also send my greetings to Apelles, whom Christ has approved *because Apelles successfully endured trials*. Tell the *believers who live in the house* of Aristobulus that I send my greetings to them.¹¹ Also tell Herodion, who is my fellow Jew, that I send my greetings to him. Tell the same thing to those who *live in the house* of Narcissus who belong to the Lord.¹² Tell the same thing to Tryphaena and *her sister* Tryphosa, who work hard for the Lord. I also send my greetings to Persis. *We all* love her and she has worked very hard for the Lord.¹³ Tell Rufus, who is an outstanding Christian, that I send my greetings to him. *Tell the same thing to* his mother, *who has treated me as though I were her son* [MET].¹⁴ Tell Asyncritus and Phlegon and Hermes and Patrobas and Hermas and the fellow believers who *meet* with them that I am sending my greetings to them.¹⁵ I also send my greetings to Philologus, to *his wife* Julia (OR, *his sister* Julia), to Nereus and his sister, and to Olympas, and to all God's people who *meet* with them.¹⁶ Greet one another affectionately, but in a pure way, *when you gather together*. The *believers in* all the Christian congregations [HYP] *in this area* <send their greetings to/say they are thinking fondly of> you.

Romans 16:17-20

THEME: *Note those who are causing quarrels among you and those who cause people to turn away from God. Avoid them, because they only want to satisfy their own desires and deceive those who do not suspect their motives. If you avoid such people, God will soon crush Satan under your feet.*

¹⁷ My fellow believers, I exhort you that you beware of those people who are causing divisions among you and who cause people to turn away from God [MTY] because they teach things that are contrary to the message about Christ that **you** have learned (OR, that others taught you). Keep away from such people! ¹⁸ They do not serve our Lord Christ! On the contrary, they only want to satisfy their own desires [MTY]! Also, by all the eloquent things that they say [DOU] they deceive the minds of those people who do not realize that their teaching is false. ¹⁹ Believers everywhere know that **you** have paid attention to the good message about Christ, with the result that I rejoice about **you**. But I also want you to be wise, with the result that you do what is good. I also want you to avoid doing what is evil. ²⁰ If you avoid people who teach what is false, what will soon happen [MET] will be as though God, who causes us to be peaceful, will be crushing Satan under your feet! I pray that our Lord Jesus will continue to act kindly towards you.

Romans 16:21-23

THEME: *Several of those who are with me send their greetings.*

²¹ Timothy, who works with me, and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, who are my fellow Jews, want you to know that they are <sending their greetings to/thinking fondly of> you. ²² I, Tertius, one who belongs to the Lord, also want you to know that I am <sending my greetings to/thinking fondly of> you. I am writing this letter as Paul tells me what to write for him. ²³ I, Paul, am staying in the house of Gaius, and the whole congregation here meets in his house. He also wants you to know that he is <sending his greetings to/thinking fondly of> you. Erastus, the treasurer of this city, also wants you to know that he is <sending his greetings to/thinking fondly of> you. Our fellow believer Quartus also <sends his greetings to you./says he is thinking fondly of you.>^a

Romans 16:25-27

THEME: *We should forever praise the One who alone is God, who alone is truly wise.*

²⁵ As I proclaim the good message about Jesus Christ, I tell about God, the one who is able to strengthen you spiritually. I also proclaim the truth that was not revealed {which God did not reveal} in all previous ages/times ²⁶ but which has now been {which he has now} revealed. I, along with others, have proclaimed what the prophets wrote about Christ. We are doing what the eternal God commanded us(exc)/me to do. We want people in all ethnic groups to know Christ so that they can believe in him and obey him. ²⁷ I desire that by Jesus Christ enabling us, we will forever praise the one who alone is God, who alone is truly wise. <May it be so!!Amen!>

^a Some Greek manuscripts add v. 24, "May the Lord Jesus Christ continue to act kindly toward you all. <Amen!!May it be so!>"

The Apostle Paul wrote several letters to the Christians at Corinth. We call this letter **1 Corinthians**

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

THEME: As your apostle, I greet you Corinthian believers, and I desire that God bless you.

1 ¹I, Paul, *am writing this letter*. Sosthenes, our fellow believer, is with *me as I write it*. God appointed me to be an apostle of Christ Jesus because that is what God desired. ² *I am sending this letter* to you who belong to the congregations of God in Corinth *city*. You have been set apart *by God* {God has set you apart} for himself because <of your close relationship with/you belong to> Christ Jesus. God has appointed you to be his people and to live in a morally pure way, just like he has appointed all the people everywhere who belong to him to live in a morally pure way. You and they have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ [MTY]. He is their sovereign Lord as well as the sovereign Lord of all of us(*inc*) who have trusted in him.

³We(*exc*) desire that God, who is our *heavenly* Father, and Jesus Christ, who is our sovereign Lord, will continue to act kindly toward you and cause you to experience *inner* peace.

1 Corinthians 1:4-9

THEME: I thank God for you and for all the spiritual abilities that he has given you.

⁴I very often [HYP] thank God concerning you because he has acted toward you kindly, acting in ways that you do not deserve. He has done this because of your <having a close relationship with/being united to> Christ Jesus. ⁵That is, *God* has very abundantly [HYP] helped you spiritually because of your <having a close relationship with/being united to> Christ. Specifically, God has abundantly [HYP] enabled you to speak messages *that his Spirit revealed to you*, and he has abundantly enabled you to know many things [HYP] that his Spirit revealed to you. ⁶In that way, *he* confirmed to you that what we(*exc*) proclaimed about Christ is true. ⁷As a result, while you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to return, within your group you truly possess [LIT] every ability that *God's* Spirit gives *to believers*. ⁸God will also cause you to steadfastly *trust Christ to the very end of your lives* [EUP]. The result will be that God will not consider you guilty of *any sin* when our Lord Jesus Christ returns to earth [MTY]. ⁹You can depend on God to do that. He is the one who chose you to become intimately associated with his Son, Jesus Christ, who is our Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:10-17

THEME: Stop dividing into groups in your congregations on the basis of which Christian leader you favor.

¹⁰My fellow believers, by the authority of [MTY] our Lord Jesus Christ, I urgently appeal to all of you to agree with one another. What I mean is, stop dividing into groups. Instead, be united [MET] concerning what you understand *about spiritual matters* and be united in what you decide. ¹¹My fellow believers, *I urge this* because some members of Chloe's household have told me that you are quarreling among yourselves. ¹²That is, some of you say, "Paul is the one to whom we are *loyal*," and others say, "Peter is the one to whom we are *loyal*," and still others say, "Christ is the one to whom we are *loyal*." ¹³*It is ridiculous that* [RHQ] *you are quarreling and dividing up into groups instead of being loyal to Christ alone*. <Christ certainly has not divided himself into parts and distributed those parts out *to groups of people who oppose each other!*/Has Christ divided himself into parts and distributed those parts out *to groups of people who oppose each other?*> [MET, RHQ] <I, Paul, certainly did not die on the cross for you!/Did I, Paul die on the cross for you?> [RHQ] When you were baptized {When someone baptized you}, <you certainly did not promise that you were submitting to *me!*/did you promise that you were submitting to *me?*> [RHQ] ¹⁴I thank *God* that Crispus and Gaius were the only ones from among you whom I baptized. ¹⁵As a result, no one *there in Corinth except those two* can say, "Paul baptized me so that I would become <his disciple/submissive to him>." ¹⁶*Now I remember that* I also baptized the household of Stephanas, but I do not remember baptizing anyone else *there*. ¹⁷Christ sent me not *primarily* to baptize people but to preach the good message about him. When I do that, he does not want me to use words that human philosophers *consider* wise [IRO]. I do not want the message about *what he accomplished when he was nailed to the cross* [MTY] to lose its power.

1 Corinthians 1:18-19

THEME: *The message about Christ dying on the cross is the means of saving us who believe it.*

¹⁸ Those who are perishing spiritually *because they do not believe that message* consider that the message about what Christ accomplished when he was nailed to the cross [MTY] is foolish. But to us who are being saved {whom God is saving} *spiritually because we believe that message*, it demonstrates that God acts powerfully in order to save us. ¹⁹ *It is like what God said that a prophet wrote long ago,*

By the things that I will do, I will show that the ideas of those who think [IRO] they are wise are completely useless. I will ignore the ideas that they think are [IRO] so smart.

1 Corinthians 1:20-25

THEME: *Some people think that the message about Christ is foolish, but to us whom God has chosen, it shows God's power.*

²⁰ So, do you know *what God thinks* about what [RHQ] people who [IRO] consider themselves to be wise and scholars and philosophers say? *He does not pay attention to what they say, because [RHQ] he has shown clearly that what unbelievers think is [IRO] wise is not wise at all, but is really foolish.* ²¹ God, acting very wisely, made it impossible for unbelievers to know God by doing what they thought was [IRO] wise. Instead, he was happy to save those who trust in Christ as the result of their hearing *the message that was proclaimed to them, a message that others consider to be foolish.* ²² The Jews want *people to prove, by performing miracles, that their message is true.* The non-Jews want to hear only messages consisting of talk that they consider to be very wise. ²³ As for us, we proclaim *the message about what Christ accomplished for us when he was nailed {when they nailed him} to the cross.* That message offends Jews *because they do not think that the Messiah will die, and non-Jews think it is [IRO] a foolish message.* ²⁴ But to us whom God has chosen to belong to himself, both Jews and non-Jews, that message shows that God acted powerfully and wisely *by sending Christ to die for us.* ²⁵ *Unbelievers may think [IRO] that God was acting foolishly by doing that, but the truth is that he was acting more wisely than unbelievers who think that [IRO] they are wise. And unbelievers may think that God was acting weakly by sending his son to die, but he was acting more powerfully than unbelievers who think [IRO] that they act powerfully.*

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

THEME: *God chose mostly despised, not important, people to belong to Christ; so you should boast only about him.*

²⁶ My fellow believers, remember what *kind of people you* were when God chose you. *Not many of you* whom he chose are people whom *unbelievers considered to be wise.* Very few of you were considered to be important. Very few of you came from families with a high social standing. ²⁷ Instead, it was *usually* those whom *unbelievers considered to be foolish* whom God chose. He did that in order to shame/discredit those whom *unbelievers consider [IRO] wise.* It was *usually* those whom *unbelievers considered [IRO] unimportant* whom God chose, in order to shame/discredit those whom *unbelievers consider important.* ²⁸ It was *usually* those who are despised and considered {whom *unbelievers despise and consider*} worthless whom God chose, in order to make completely ineffective those whom *unbelievers consider to be important.* ²⁹ *He did that* in order that no one could boast to God about being wise or important. ³⁰ It is because of what God *has done* that you <have a close relationship with/belong to> Christ Jesus. God *accomplished* his wise *plan to save us* by what Christ did for us. As a result of what Christ did, God erases the record of our sins, sets us apart for himself, and frees us from our being guilty *for our sins.* ³¹ So, it is **the Lord** whom we should boast about, *not about one spiritual leader being better than another.* We should do as <a prophet/Jeremiah> wrote in the Scriptures that we should do:

Those who boast should boast *only* about what the Lord *has done.*

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

THEME: *God showed that my message was true by the powerful things that he did, not because I spoke in a way that would make people think highly of me.*

2 ¹ My fellow believers, when I came to you, I proclaimed to you the message that God had revealed to me. But I did not proclaim it using eloquent words that would make people think highly of me, nor did I argue in a way that unbelievers would think was very wise. ² I did that because I decided that I would speak only about Jesus Christ. Specifically, I told you *what he accomplished for us when he was killed by being nailed {when they killed him by nailing him} to a cross.* ³ Furthermore, when I was with you, I felt that I was not adequate *to do what Christ wanted me to do.* I was afraid *that I would not be able to do it,* and because of that I was trembling very much. ⁴ When I taught you and preached to you, I did not speak words that *unbelievers would consider [IRO] wise* in order to convince them that my message was true. Instead, God's Spirit showed that it was true by *enabling me to powerfully perform miracles.* ⁵ *I taught and preached that way* in order that you might believe *my message,* not because you heard words that people *considered to be [IRO] wise,* but *because you realized* God's power.

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

THEME: *Unbelievers do not consider that my message is wise, because I speak what God's Spirit reveals to me.*

⁶ I do teach a message that people who are *spiritually* mature *consider* to be wise. But I do not teach a message that unbelievers *consider* to be wise. I also do not teach a message that unbelieving rulers in the world consider to be wise. *What they think about it does not matter*, because *some day* they will <lose their power/not be ruling any more>. ⁷ Instead, I teach about what God planned wisely *long ago*. It is something that people did not know about previously because *God* did not reveal it previously. But God determined before he created the world that he would greatly benefit us by his wise plan. ⁸ None of those who rule this world knew that wise plan. If they had known it, they would not have nailed our wonderful Lord to the cross. ⁹ But *we believers need to remember these words that a prophet wrote in the Scriptures:*

Things that no one has ever seen,
things that no one ever heard,
things that no one ever thought could happen,
those are the things that God has prepared for those who love him.

¹⁰ God has caused his Spirit to reveal those things **to us(inc) believers**. His Spirit can do that because he knows thoroughly the meaning of all things. He even knows the things about God that are very difficult to understand. ¹¹ Only a person himself (OR, a person's spirit) knows what he is thinking. Similarly, only God's Spirit knows what God is thinking.

¹² It was not the ideas that unbelievers teach that we accepted. Instead, it was the Spirit who came from God that we received, in order that we might know the things that God has freely done for us. ¹³ Those are the things that I tell you about. As I do that, I do not tell you things that someone *whom others thought was* [IRO] wise taught me. Instead, I tell you truths that *God's Spirit taught me*, and I explain those spiritual truths to people whose thinking is guided by God's Spirit (OR, I teach spiritual *truths* to spiritual *people*). ¹⁴ Those who are unbelievers reject the truths that *God's Spirit teaches us(inc)*, because they *consider those truths to be foolish*. They cannot understand them, because it is God's Spirit who enables us to evaluate those truths correctly, *and those people do not have God's Spirit*. ¹⁵ We who have God's Spirit can judge correctly the *value* of all truths *that the Spirit reveals*, but *unbelievers* cannot evaluate us correctly. ¹⁶ *As one of our prophets wrote:*

No human [RHQ] has known what the Lord is thinking.
No human [RHQ] is able to instruct him.

But we believers **are** able to think about things [MTY] in the way that Christ thinks about them,

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

THEME: *I was unable to teach you difficult concepts, because you were controlled by your self-directed nature, as evidenced by your quarreling about which leader to whom you are loyal.*

3 ¹ My fellow believers, *when I was with you previously*, I was not able to teach you as *I would teach people who are controlled by the Holy Spirit {whom the Holy Spirit controls}*. Instead, *I had to teach you as I would teach people* whom their self-directed nature controls. *I taught very simple concepts to you who had recently believed in Christ, as a parent would speak very simple words to a baby*. ² I did not *teach you things that were difficult for you to understand, just like a woman does not give her baby solid food that the baby cannot chew and digest. And just like a woman <gives her baby milk/breast-feeds her baby>*, *I taught you simple spiritual concepts*, because at that time you were not able to understand difficult things. And you are still not able to understand difficult concepts, ³ because you are still controlled by your self-directed nature. Some of you are jealous and quarreling. <That shows that your self-directed nature is controlling you!/Does not that prove your self-directed nature is controlling you?> [RHQ] It shows that *you are acting like* unbelievers act. ⁴ By some of you saying, "I am *loyal* to Paul," and others saying, "I am *loyal* to Apollos," <you show that *you are acting like* unbelievers./does not it show that *you are acting like* unbelievers?> [RHQ]

1 Corinthians 3:5-9a

THEME: *I preached the gospel to you first, and Apollos followed, but we are both serving God equally.*

⁵ *So what you really ought to think about Apollos and me* [RHQ] is that we(*dl*) are merely men who serve God. As a result of our *telling you the message about Christ*, you trusted in him. Both of us(*dl*) are merely doing the work that the Lord appointed us to do. ⁶ I was *the first one who preached God's message to you. I was like* [MET] someone who plants seeds. *Later, Apollos taught you more of God's message. That was like* [MET] someone who waters plants *after they start to grow*. But it is God who *enables people to grow spiritually, just like he is the one who causes plants to grow*. ⁷ *So the person who first preaches God's message to people is not important, and the person who later teaches people more of God's message is not important, just like* [MET] it is not the person who plants *the seeds* or the person who waters *the plants* who is important. Instead, it is God, who causes plants to grow *and who causes people to grow spiritually, who is important*. ⁸ The person *who first preaches God's message to people and the one who later teaches them more of God's message* [MET] both <are *trying to reach the same goal/have the same purpose*>. And God will reward each of them according to how they served him. ⁹ Remember that Apollos and I are both working together for God. *You do not belong to us*. Just like a field *belongs to its owner, not to those who work in it*, you belong to God, *not to us who work for him*.

1 Corinthians 3:9b-15

THEME: *Each one who teaches believers must examine what he is teaching them because God will reward him only if his teaching is valuable and long-lasting.*

Also, a house belongs to its owner. *It does not belong to the man who built it. Similarly, God is the one to whom you belong.* ¹⁰ Just like a skilled person puts a foundation in the ground before he builds a house, as a result of God kindly helping me [MET], *I was the first one who declared the message about Christ to you. And, just like others build a house on its foundation, there were others who later taught you more about Christ. But just like each person who builds a house must be careful about what materials he uses to build it [MET], each person who teaches God's truth must be careful about what he teaches.* ¹¹ Just like people can put in only one foundation for a house [MET], *there is only one message that we can give to people. That message is about Jesus Christ.* ¹² Furthermore, people can build a house on its foundation with materials that are valuable and do not burn easily, such as gold, silver, and expensive jewels. Or they could build a house with materials that are not valuable and that burn easily, such as wood, hay, and straw. ¹³ Later it will become clear/evident what kind of material they used to build the house. *Similarly, when people teach others God's truth, it will later become clear what kind of things they taught. God will make that clear/evident at the time when he judges us [MTY].* ¹⁴ When a fire starts burning a house, it becomes clear whether the builders used materials in their work that will burn, or materials that will not burn. Similarly, [MET] when God judges us, it will be clear whether we taught others things that were long-lasting and valuable or not. *If the materials that are used to build a house are materials that do not burn, the builder will receive a reward [MET]. Similarly, if we have taught others things that are valuable and long-lasting, God will give us a reward.* ¹⁵ *If the things that we have taught are not valuable and long-lasting [MET], we will not get a reward. We will be saved {God will save us} from hell, but that is all that we will get. We will be like a man who escapes from a fire without saving any of his possessions.*

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

THEME: *God will destroy anyone who destroys the unity of a congregation.*

¹⁶ <You need to remember that God is present among you(pl) as he was present in the Temple in Jerusalem./Do you not know that God is present among you(pl) as he was present in the Temple in Jerusalem?> [RHQ] God's Spirit lives within you. ¹⁷ So, just like God will destroy anyone who tries to destroy his Temple, *he will destroy anyone who destroys the unity of a congregation. He will do that because he has set you, his people, apart for himself, just like he set his Temple apart for himself.*

1 Corinthians 3:18-23

THEME: *Stop being proud about one Christian leader or another, because we are all just working for your benefit.*

¹⁸ Some among you think that you are wise because unbelievers thought you were wise previously. Stop deceiving yourselves. *If you really want to be wise, by accepting what God considers to be wise you should be willing to let unbelievers consider that you are foolish [IRO].* ¹⁹ You should do that because things that unbelievers consider to be [IRO] wise, God considers to be foolish. *We can learn from the Scriptures what God says about that,*

Those who think that they are [IRO] wise, he messes up their plans by the mistakes they make!

²⁰ And we can learn from these words of Scripture,

The Lord considers as useless the thoughts of humans who think that they are [IRO] wise.

²¹ So stop boasting about *how good one Christian leader is or how good another Christian leader is!* All of us(exc) exist as leaders only to help you! ²² Specifically, do not boast about me, or about Apollos, or about Peter! Everything in the world exists to benefit you believers. Whether you live or whether you die, the things that are happening now or the things that will happen in the future, they are all to benefit you. ²³ *You should boast about Christ, not about your leaders, because you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.*

1 Corinthians 4:1-7

THEME: *Stop judging your leaders' value; do not be proud of one and despise another.*

4 ¹ So, people ought to consider us apostles (OR, Apollos and me) to be merely servants of Christ. God has given to us(exc) the work of telling others the message that God has now revealed to us. ² With respect to doing that, those who are given work are required {give others some work to do require them} to do that work faithfully. ³ I am not concerned whether you or the judges in some court decide whether I have done my work faithfully or not. I do not even judge myself about that. ⁴ I do not think that I have done anything wrong, but that does not prove that I have done nothing wrong. The Lord is the one who judges me. ⁵ So stop judging any of us(exc) before the time when God judges everyone [MTY]! Do not judge us before the Lord comes. He is the one who will reveal the sinful things that people have done secretly. He will even reveal what people have thought in their minds. At that time God will praise each person as each one of them deserves.

⁶ My fellow believers, I have told you all these things as illustrations of myself and Apollos. I have done this for your sake, in order that you may learn to live according to the saying, "Do not act contrary to what is {what they have} written in the

Scriptures. If you follow that rule, you will not be proud of one *spiritual leader* and despise another. ⁷ <No one has made any of you superior to others!/Why do any of you think that you are superior to others?> [RHQ] *All the abilities* that you have, <you received *from God*./did you not receive them *from God*?> [RHQ] So if you received them all *from God*, <you should not boast *thinking*, “I got these abilities *from myself, not from God*!”/why do you boast *thinking*, “I got these abilities *from myself, not from God*?”> [RHQ]

1 Corinthians 4:8-13

THEME: *It is disgusting that you are so proud of your spiritual gifts and that you despise us apostles.*

⁸ *It is disgusting that you act as though* [IRO] you have already received everything that you need *spiritually*. You act as though [IRO] you were *spiritually rich* (OR, you had received all *the spiritual gifts you need*). You act as though [IRO] you had already begun to rule as kings with Christ. Well, I wish that you really were ruling *with him*, in order that we *apostles* might also rule with you! ⁹ But it seems as though God has put us *apostles* on display at the end of the line. We(*exc*) are like men who have been condemned to die, who have been put in the arena where everyone can see *the wild animals* killing them. And not only people, but even angels all over the world *are watching us, as people* watch those who are performing a play *in a theater*. ¹⁰ Many people consider us to be [IRO] fools because we *preach about* Christ, but you proudly *think [IRO]* that you are wise because <of your close relationship with/you belong to> Christ. Many people *consider us* [IRO] to be unimpressive, but you *proudly think that you* impress others. People respect you, but they do not respect us. ¹¹ Up to this present time we have often been hungry. We have often been thirsty. We have ragged clothes. Often we have been beaten {others have beaten us}. We *have traveled so much that we have no regular homes to live in*. ¹² We work very hard *to earn a living*. When we are cursed *by people* {When *people* curse us}, we *ask God* to bless them. When we are persecuted {When *people* cause us to suffer}, we endure it. ¹³ When we are slandered *by people* {When *people* slander us}, we reply kindly to them. Up to this present time *unbelievers consider us to be worthless* [MET], *as though we were garbage and a rubbish heap*.

1 Corinthians 4:14-17

THEME: *Imitate the way in which I serve Christ.*

¹⁴ I am writing this to you, not to make you feel ashamed, but instead to warn you as *though you were* my dear children. ¹⁵ I say that because as *an apostle of Christ Jesus I was the first one who* proclaimed the good message to you. As a result, I was the one who enabled you to receive eternal life. So even if there were thousands of Christians who instruct you [MET], I am the only one who became *like a father to you*. ¹⁶ So I urge you to *live for Christ* the way I do. ¹⁷ In order to *help you do that*, I <have sent/will be sending> Timothy to you. I love him *as though he were* my son. He serves the Lord faithfully. He will remind you of the way I conduct my life *as one who* <has a close relationship with/belongs to> the Lord. The way I conduct my life is the same as how I teach *others to live* in all the congregations *to whom I have spoken*.

1 Corinthians 4:18-21

THEME: *I hope you will change your thinking, so I do not have to punish you when I come there.*

¹⁸ Some of you have become proud, thinking that I will not come there *to rebuke your congregation about what they are doing*. ¹⁹ But if the Lord wants me to come, I will come to you soon. Then I will not *pay any attention* to what those proud people say. Instead, I will find out *whether they have God's power*. ²⁰ Remember that God *judges whether or not we are letting him rule our lives, not by listening to how we talk, but by seeing whether his power is present* <among us/in our lives>. ²¹ So which do you prefer? Do you want me to come to you and punish you *because you have not changed your ways*, or shall I come to you and act lovingly and gently toward you *because you have done what I told you to do*?

1 Corinthians 5:1-5

THEME: *You should expel the man in your congregation who has acted so immorally.*

5 ¹ *Now I want to discuss another matter*. It has been {People have} reported to me, and I believe that it is true, that some people among you have been acting in a sexually immoral way, in a way that is so bad that not even <pagans/people who do not know about God> act that way. People tell me that a man is living with his stepmother (OR, his father's other wife). ² You should be sad about what that man is doing! He should have been expelled {You should have expelled him} from your congregation! *But you have not done that*, so <how can you be proud, *thinking that you are spiritually mature*?/it is disgusting that you are proud, *thinking that you are spiritually mature*!> [RHQ] ³ As for me, I have already decided *how you should* punish that man. And even though I am away from you, my spirit is with you, and you should do as I would do if I were there with you. ⁴ *What I have decided is that* when you have gathered together with the authority [MTY] of our Lord Jesus, and my spirit is with you, and the power of our Lord Jesus *is with you*, ⁵ you should put that man into Satan's hands. Then Satan can injure/punish his body, in order that *he will turn away from his sinful behavior* and his spirit will be saved on the day when the Lord *returns* [MTY].

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

THEME: *Make sure that no one in your congregation is acting immorally or maliciously or wickedly.*

⁶ It is not good that, while you are letting that immoral man continue to be in your congregation, you are boasting about being spiritually mature. <You know that a small amount of yeast affects all the bread dough [MET] into which it is put {a woman puts it}./Do you not know that a small amount of yeast affects all the bread dough [MET] into which it is put?> [RHQ] Similarly, one person who continues to sin will have a bad effect on all the congregation. ⁷ So, just like we Jews expel the old yeast from our houses during the Passover celebration in order that we may have a fresh batch of dough without yeast in it [MET], you must expel such evil people from your congregation. Do that so that you can truly be holy people, as I know that you really are. Remember that Christ was sacrificed {sacrificed himself} so that God could spare us from being punished for our sins, just like the Jews sacrificed lambs during the first Passover celebration so that God would spare their first-born sons from being killed. ⁸ So let us celebrate the fact that God has freed us from punishing us for our sins [MET], just like the Jews in later years celebrated Passover to celebrate God freeing them from being slaves in Egypt. They made sure that there was no old yeast in the dough. They ate bread that had no yeast in it. Similarly, we should make sure that there are no people in our congregations [MET] who act maliciously toward others or act wickedly. Instead, make sure [MET] that those in our congregations are ones who act sincerely and speak truthfully.

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

THEME: *Expel wicked people from your congregation.*

⁹ In the previous letter that I wrote to you, I said that you should not associate with sexually immoral people. ¹⁰ I did not mean that you should not associate with **unbelievers** who are immoral, or who desire things that belong to others, or who <forcefully seize things that belong to others/are swindlers>, or who worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid all people like that. ¹¹ But now I am stating clearly that when I wrote, I meant that you should not associate with those who say that they are fellow believers, if they are sexually immoral or if they desire and forcefully seize things that belong to others, or worship idols, or slander others, or become drunk. You should not associate with people like that, and you should not even eat with them! ¹² It is certainly not [RHQ] my business to judge people who are not believers and who do not belong to *Christian congregations*. But it certainly is [RHQ] your business to judge those who are in *your congregation*. ¹³ God is the one who will judge those who are not believers. *Do as the Scriptures command:* "Expel the wicked person from your midst!"

1 Corinthians 6:1-6

THEME: *It is disgusting that you prosecute fellow believers and let judges who are not believers decide your cases.*

6 ¹ Now another matter: When any of you *believers* accuses another believer about some matter, he takes that matter to judges who are not believers, *for them to decide the case*, instead of asking God's people to *decide it*. <That is disgusting!/Why do you do that?> [RHQ] ² <I want you to know that we who are God's people will *some day* judge those who are unbelievers./Do you not know that we who are God's people will *some day* judge those who are unbelievers?> [RHQ] So, since you will be judging unbelievers, <you certainly are capable of judging between *believers who disagree on small matters*!/are you not you capable of judging between *believers who disagree on small matters*?> [RHQ] ³ <You should keep in mind that we will even judge angels!/Do you not know that we will even judge angels?> [RHQ] So we certainly should be able to judge about *matters that relate to how we conduct our lives* here on earth! ⁴ Therefore, when you *believers* have a dispute, <you should certainly not choose as judges to *decide your case* people whom the congregation cannot respect *because those judges are not believers*!/why do you choose as judges to *decide your case* people whom the congregation cannot respect *because those judges are not believers*?> [RHQ] ⁵ I am saying this to make you ashamed. <Surely there is someone among you who is wise enough to judge disputes between believers!/Is there no one among you who is wise enough to judge disputes between believers?> [RHQ] ⁶ But instead, some believers *among you* accuse other believers in a legal court. And what is worse, you let the cases be judged by unbelievers {unbelievers judge the cases}!

1 Corinthians 6:7-11

THEME: *God has freed you from your former sinful behavior, so remember that he will exclude from his kingdom those who engage in all kinds of sinful behavior.*

⁷ The fact that you have **any** lawsuits among you shows that you have completely failed as *Christians* (OR, *allowed Satan to defeat you*). <You should allow other believers to wrong you *without taking them to court*! /Why do you not allow other believers to wrong you *without taking them to court*?> [RHQ] <You should not accuse them when they cheat you!/Why do you accuse them when they cheat you?> [RHQ] ⁸ But *what is happening is that* some of you are cheating others and doing wrong to them. *That is bad*. But you are doing that to fellow believers, *and that is worse!*

⁹ <You should keep in mind that wicked people will not become *members of the group* over whom God will rule./Do you not know that wicked people will not become *members of the group* over whom God will rule?> [RHQ] Do not be deceived {Do not deceive yourselves} *by thinking wrongly about these matters*. People who are sexually immoral, or who worship idols,

or who <commit adultery/have sex with someone to whom they are not married>, or who happily allow others to commit homosexual acts with them, or who take the initiative in committing homosexual acts,¹⁰ or who are thieves, or who desire and forcefully seize things that belong to others, or who are drunkards, or who slander others, or who are swindlers, will not enter the place where God rules.¹¹ Some of you previously did things like that. But *God* has freed/cleansed you [MET] *from your sinful behavior*. He has set you apart for himself. He has erased the record of your sins *because you trusted* [MTY] in the Lord Jesus Christ and because of what the Spirit of our God *has done for you*.

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

THEME: *Because the Lord wants us to use our bodies in ways that please him, we must avoid all sexually immoral acts.*

¹² *Some of you may say*, “God allows us to do anything *that he does not forbid*.” But *I would reply*, “*That is true*, but not everything that God permits us to do helps us.” *Yes, as some of you say*, God permits us to do anything *that he does not forbid*. But as for me, I will not let anything make me *its slave*; *that is, I will not do anything that will gain control over me in such a way that I will not be able to stop doing it*.¹³ *Some of you may also say*, “Food is just for us to put in the stomach, and the stomach is just for us to put food in. And since God will do away with food and stomachs *when he gives us our new bodies*, what we do with our bodies sexually does not affect us any more than eating food does.” But what you have concluded is wrong, because the Lord does not want us to use our bodies to do sexually immoral things. Instead, the Lord wants us to use our bodies in ways that please him. Also, the Lord wants us to do what is good for our bodies.¹⁴ God, by his power, caused the Lord Jesus to live again after he died, and he will cause us to live again after we die, *which shows that he is very concerned about our bodies*.

¹⁵ <You should keep in mind that your bodies belong to Christ./Do you not know that your bodies belong to Christ?> [RHQ] So, should I or any other believer [RHQ] take our body, which belongs to Christ, and join it *sexually* to a prostitute? No, certainly not!¹⁶ When a man has sexual relations [EUP] with a prostitute, *it is as though* their two bodies become one body. <You should never forget that!/Do you not know that?> [RHQ] What Moses wrote *about people who join together sexually is*, “The two of them will become *as though they are one body*.”¹⁷ But anyone who is united {who joins himself} to the Lord becomes one with him spiritually.

¹⁸ Always <run away from/avoid> committing sexually immoral acts. Other sins that people commit do not affect their bodies, but those who commit sexually immoral acts sin against their own bodies.¹⁹ <Keep in mind that your bodies are like [MET] temples of the Holy Spirit./Do you not know that your bodies are like [MET] temples of the Holy Spirit?> [RHQ] The Spirit, whom God gave you, lives within you. You do not belong to yourselves. You belong to God,²⁰ *because when his Son died for you it was as though* [MET] God paid a price for you. So honor God by *how you use your bodies!*

1 Corinthians 7:1-7

THEME: *Married people should not deprive their spouses of sexual relations, except under special conditions.*

7 ¹ Now *I will reply* to the things that you wrote to me about.

It is good for people not to get married.² But because many people are committing sexual immorality, *which God detests*, every man should have his own wife *with whom he can have sexual relations*, and every woman should have her own husband *with whom she can have sexual relations*.³ Every man must continue having sexual relations [EUP] with his wife, and every woman must continue having sexual relations with her husband.⁴ A man’s wife does not have the right over her own body *to be the only one to decide about having sexual relations with her husband*. Instead, her husband also has a right *to decide about that*. Similarly, a woman’s husband does not have the right over his own body *to be the only one to decide about having sexual relations with his wife*. Instead, his wife also has a right *to decide about that*.⁵ You may deny each other *of having sexual relations* [EUP] only if you both first agree to do that for a short time, in order that you may both have more time to pray. Then after that, begin having sexual relations again [EUP] in order that Satan will not be able to persuade you *to have sex with someone else* because you are unable to control your sexual desires.

⁶ I am telling you these things to say that *God allows you to get married, but he does not say that you must get married*.

⁷ I myself wish that all people would stay *unmarried/single*, as I am. But God has enabled each person to live in different ways. He has enabled some people to *live without getting married*, and he has enabled other people to *get married*.

1 Corinthians 7:8-16

THEME: *It is all right to get married, but it is wrong to get divorced. However, you should not force an unbelieving spouse to keep living with you.*

⁸ Now I want to say this to you unmarried people and to you whose spouses have died: It would be good for you to remain *unmarried* as I am.⁹ But if you cannot control your *sexual desires* [EUP], you should get married. It is better to be married *so that you can satisfy your sexual desires with your spouse* than to constantly have a strong desire [EUP] *for sexual relations*.

¹⁰ And now I will give a command for *believers who are married*. This is not a command from me alone; it also comes from the Lord Jesus. You married women must not <separate from/divorce> your husbands!¹¹ But if any of you do that, you

must remain unmarried, or else you should be reconciled with your husband *and live with him again*. Similarly, men must not <separate from/divorce> their wives.

¹² Now I say this to the rest of you, *to those who became believers after they were married. This is what I am saying, not what the Lord has commanded*. If someone has a wife who is not a believer, if she is willing to keep living with him, he must not divorce her. ¹³ Similarly, if a woman has a husband who is not a believer, if he is willing to keep living with her, she must not divorce him. ¹⁴ *I say that* because God has set apart every woman's unbelieving husband *for himself* because of his wife *being a believer*, and God has set apart every man's unbelieving wife *for himself* because of her husband *being a believer*. If that were not true, *God would consider* their children unacceptable. But, the fact is that *God does consider* them acceptable to him.*

¹⁵ However, if a woman's husband who is not a believer or a man's wife who is not a believer wants to leave, let *him or her* do so. If that happens, the husband or wife who is a believer should not force the other one to stay. God has chosen us in order that we may live **peacefully**. ¹⁶ *You who are believers should allow your unbelieving spouses to leave you if they want to*, because you women *who are believers*, <there is no way that you can be sure that God will save your husband if you stay together./how can you be sure that God will save your husband if you stay together?> [RHQ] (OR, perhaps God will save your husband if you stay together.) Similarly, you men *who are believers*, <there is no way that you can be sure that God will save your wives if you stay together./how can you be sure that God will save your wives if you stay together?> [RHQ] (OR, perhaps God will save your wives if you stay together.)

1 Corinthians 7:17-24

THEME: *In general, each person should remain in the status that he had before he became a believer.*

¹⁷ However, each person should continue in the status that the Lord gave him, the status that he had when the Lord called him *to belong to him*. That is the rule that I tell people in all the congregations *where I speak*. ¹⁸ If a man had already been circumcised [RHQ] when he became a Christian, he should not *try to pretend that he is not* circumcised. If a man had not been circumcised [RHQ] before he became a Christian, he should not become circumcised. ¹⁹ *You should not try to change your status that way*, because it means nothing *to God* whether someone is circumcised or not. What is important is that we obey what God has commanded. ²⁰ *Generally*, each person should remain in the status that he had when he became a Christian. ²¹ If one of you was a slave when you(*sg*) became a Christian [RHQ], do not be concerned about it. However, if you get an opportunity to be free, do *what you need to do to become free!* ²² *Do not worry about your previously being a slave*, because those who were slaves before they became Christians, the Lord has freed them *from Satan's control*. Similarly, those who were not slaves before they became Christians, *it is as though* [MET] they are Christ's slaves *because they must do what he tells them to do* [MET]. ²³ *Christ* paid a price to buy you *when he died for you*. So do not *act as if you are evil people's slaves by doing the evil things that they tell you to do*. ²⁴ My fellow believers, *I repeat that in general* each believer, being in fellowship with God, should continue in the status that he had before he became a Christian.

1 Corinthians 7:25-28

THEME: *It is not sinful to get married, but married people will have a lot of problems.*

²⁵ Now *I will answer your question* about women who have never married. There is nothing that the Lord has commanded me *to write about them*, but I am writing this to tell you what I think *is best*, because the Lord *Jesus* has mercifully enabled what I say to be reliable. ²⁶ There are a lot of distressing events *happening* now (OR, that will soon happen), so I think that it is better for people to remain in the status that they now have. ²⁷ If any of you *men* are married [RHQ], do not try to divorce your wife. If any of you are unmarried [RHQ], do not seek a wife. ²⁸ But if *any of you men* get married, you have not committed a sin *by doing that*. Likewise, if an unmarried woman gets married, she has not committed a sin *by doing that*. However, those who get married will have many troubles, so *I am urging you to remain unmarried in order that you may not experience such troubles*.

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

THEME: *We believers should not devote our time to the affairs of this life.*

²⁹ My fellow believers, this is what I mean: There is not much time left *before Christ returns*. So, from now on those men who are married should *devote themselves to serving the Lord as much* as they would if they were not married. ³⁰ Those who are sad should *devote themselves to serving the Lord as much* as they would if they were not sad. Those who are rejoicing *should devote themselves to serving the Lord as much* as they would if they were not joyful. ³¹ Those who are buying things should *devote themselves to serving the Lord as much* as they would if they did not possess those things. Because this world as it exists now will soon be gone, those who are actively involved in the affairs of this life *should not devote all their time* to be involved in those things.

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

THEME: *It is better to remain unmarried because married people are more concerned about pleasing their spouses than about how to please the Lord.*

³² Another reason why I encourage you to remain unmarried is that I desire that none of you be anxious about the everyday affairs of this life. Unmarried men are able to be primarily concerned about serving the Lord Jesus and trying to please him.

³³ But married men are often greatly concerned about the affairs of this life. Specifically, they are concerned about pleasing their wives. ³⁴ So their thinking is divided. Unmarried women are able to be concerned about serving the Lord. They want to set apart their minds and their bodies for the Lord. But married women are often concerned about the affairs of this life. Specifically, they are concerned about how to please their husbands. ³⁵ I am telling you this for your own good. I am not saying it in order to restrict you. Instead, I am saying it in order that you may do what is proper and be able to serve the Lord without being distracted {things distracting you}.

1 Corinthians 7:36-38

THEME: *It is better for a man to decide that his daughter should remain unmarried than that she should get married, but either decision is all right.*

³⁶ Some of you men have asked about your unmarried daughters. I suggest that if any man thinks that he may be treating his daughter unfairly by keeping her from marrying, and if it is already past the right time for her to get married, and if he thinks that she ought to be married, he should do what he wants to do. He should let her get married. He will not be sinning by doing that. ³⁷ But if a man feels absolutely sure that it is better that his daughter not get married, and if nothing is forcing her to get married, and if he is free to do what he decides to do on the matter, if he decides that his daughter should not get married, he is doing what is right in keeping her from marrying. ³⁸ So any man who decides that his daughter should get married is doing what is good, but if he decides that she should not get married, he is doing something even better. (OR,

³⁶ Some of you men have asked about the women to whom you are engaged to marry. If any man thinks that he may be treating that woman unfairly by not marrying her, and if it is already past the right time for her to get married, and if he wants to marry her very much, he should do what he wants to do. He should marry her. He will not be sinning by doing that. ³⁷ But if a man feels absolutely sure that it is better for him not to get married, and if nothing is forcing them to get married, if he is free to make his own decision on the matter, if he decides not to get married, he is doing what is right. ³⁸ So any man who decides that he should get married to the woman he is engaged to is doing what is good, but if he decides that he should not get married, he is doing something even better.)

1 Corinthians 7:39-40

THEME: *Women whose husbands have died are free to get remarried, but only to believers. However, they will probably remain happier if they do not marry again.*

³⁹ Women must remain married to their husbands while their husbands are still alive. But if a woman's husband dies, she is free to marry any unmarried man whom she wants to marry, but he must belong to the Lord. ⁴⁰ However, I think that she will be happier if she does not marry again. And I believe that the Spirit of God is directing me as I say that.

1 Corinthians 8:1-3

THEME: *We should not be proud about knowing the truth about idols.*

8 ¹ Now I will answer what you asked about us believers eating meat that has been sacrificed to idols. We know what some of you say, that God has enabled all of us to know the truth about things such as idols. But often we become proud because we say that we know all those things. But instead of being proud about what we know, we should show that we love our fellow believers by helping them to become spiritually mature. ² Those who think that they thoroughly know something do not yet know it as they should. ³ But as for those who love God, they know that they belong to him.

1 Corinthians 8:4-6

THEME: *There are many idols that people think are gods, but there is only one true God.*

⁴ So I will tell you about eating meat that people have sacrificed to idols. We know that it is true, as you say, that idols are not really alive. We also know that there is only one real God. ⁵ It is true that there are gods whom people think live in the heavens or whom they think live on earth. Truly, there are many beings that people call gods, and whom they call lords.

⁶ But for us believers there is only one real God. He is our heavenly Father who created everything. He is the one whom we worship and serve. Also, for us believers Jesus Christ is the one and only Lord. He is the one whom God caused to create everything. It is because of what he has done that we have spiritual life.

1 Corinthians 8:7-13

THEME: *Do not eat meat offered to idols if that would encourage other believers to eat that food contrary to their conscience.*

⁷ Nevertheless, some people do not understand *that idols are not really alive*. In the past, some among you who are believers now were accustomed to believing that idols *were really alive*. As a result, when they eat such meat *now*, they still think that it was sacrificed to an idol *that is alive*. They are not sure *that God allows believers to eat meat that has been offered to idols*. So, *when they eat such meat*, they think that they have sinned. ⁸ But God will not think more highly about us *if we eat certain foods*, or if we do not eat *certain foods*. That is, we are not more acceptable to God if we do not eat certain foods, nor are we more acceptable to him if we eat those foods. ⁹ However, be sure that you do not do anything that God allows you to do, if by doing that you would encourage any of *your fellow believers to do something that they are not sure God allows them to do*. As a result, you would be causing them to sin. ¹⁰ For example, you know *that idols are not really alive*. Suppose that you eat *food that has been sacrificed to idols* in a temple *where they worship idols*. Suppose that someone who is not sure whether God allows us to eat that food sees you eating it. *<You would be encouraging him to eat it, too./Wouldn't you be encouraging him to eat it, too?>* [RHQ] ¹¹ As a result, you who know that *idols are not really alive*, might cause that fellow believer, one for whom Christ died, *<to be ruined spiritually/to stop believing in Christ>*. ¹² By sinning against your fellow believer by causing him to do something that he thinks God does not allow us to do, *it is as though* you are sinning against Christ himself! ¹³ So if *I, Paul, think that by eating a certain food I might cause a fellow believer to be ruined spiritually*, I will never eat such food again. I do not want to cause any fellow believer *<to be ruined spiritually/to stop believing in Christ>*. *And you should <do as I do/imitate my example>*.

1 Corinthians 9:1-2

THEME: *As your apostle I am free to do anything that God allows me to do.*

9 ¹ *<I am certainly free to do all the things that God allows me to do./Do you not think that I am free to do all the things God allows me to do?>* [RHQ] *<I am an apostle./Do you not know I am an apostle?>* [RHQ] *<You certainly know that I have seen Jesus our Lord./Have not I told you that I have seen Jesus our Lord?>* [RHQ] *<It is a result of my work that you have believed in the Lord Jesus./Isn't it a result of my work that you have believed in the Lord Jesus?>* [RHQ] ² And even though other people may think that I am not an apostle, you certainly should know that I am an apostle. *Remember that your having become Christians [MET] as a result of my telling you about the Lord <confirms/shows that it is true> that I am an apostle.*

1 Corinthians 9:3-7

THEME: *Barnabas and I have the same right to receive financial support that the other apostles have.*

³ In order to defend myself, *this is what I say to those who criticize me by claiming that I do not act like an apostle*. ⁴ As for Barnabas and me, *<we certainly have the right as apostles to receive from you and other congregations food and drink for our work./do we not have the right to receive from you and other congregations food and drink for our work?>* [RHQ] ⁵ *We have the same right that the other apostles and the Lord Jesus' younger brothers and especially Peter have*. They all take along a wife who is a believer *when they travel various places in order to tell people about Christ*. *And they have a right that the people whom they work among will support their wives, too*. So *<Barnabas and I certainly have those same rights./do not Barnabas and I have those same rights?>* [RHQ] ⁶ *<It would be ridiculous to think that Barnabas and I are the only apostles who must work to earn money to pay our expenses while we are doing God's work!/Do you think that Barnabas and I are the only apostles who must work to earn money to pay our expenses while we are doing God's work?>* [RHQ] ⁷ *<Soldiers certainly do not pay their own wages./Do soldiers pay their own wages?>* [RHQ] *<Those who plant a vineyard would certainly eat some of the grapes when they become ripe./Do not those who plant a vineyard eat some of the grapes when they become ripe?>* [RHQ] *<Those who care for sheep would certainly drink the milk from those sheep./Do not those who care for sheep drink the milk from those sheep?>* [RHQ] *Similarly, those who tell others about Christ certainly have a right to receive <financial help/food> from the people to whom they preach.*

1 Corinthians 9:8-18

THEME: *God's servants have always had the right to receive financial help from others, but we have not insisted on that right because we want to preach the gospel without charge.*

⁸ *<I am saying that, not only because people think that it is right./Am I saying that only because people think that it is right?>* [RHQ] *No, I am [RHQ] saying it because it is what God said in the laws that he gave to Moses*. ⁹ Moses wrote in one of those laws, "While an ox is threshing *grain*, you must not tie its mouth shut *so that it cannot eat the grain*." *<God was not only concerned about oxen when he gave that law./Was God only concerned about oxen when he gave that law?>* [RHQ] ¹⁰ *No, he was [RHQ] concerned about us, also! Yes, God caused Moses to write those words because he is concerned about us!* Those who plow the ground confidently expect *to eat some of the crop that grows*. Those who thresh grain confidently expect *to eat some of the grain that they thresh*. *Similarly, we who proclaim the message about Christ have the right to confidently expect to receive financial help for our work*. ¹¹ And because we have proclaimed God's message to you, *<we certainly have the right to receive from you the things that we need for our bodies [MET]!/do we not have the right to receive from you the things that we need for our bodies?>* [MET, RHQ] ¹² Since other people *who*

preached to you had that right, <certainly Barnabas and I have the same right./do Barnabas and I not have the same right?> [RHQ]

However, neither of us insisted *that you give us the things that we have a right to receive from you*. Instead, we were willing to endure anything in order that we not hinder *anyone from believing* the message about Christ. ¹³ <You should keep in mind that *the priests and servants* in the Temple eat *some of the food that people bring* to the Temple./Do you not know that *the priests and servants* in the Temple eat *some of the food that people bring* to the Temple?> [RHQ] Specifically, the priests who work at the altar eat *some of the food that the people bring to sacrifice* on the altar. ¹⁴ So the Lord has commanded that those who proclaim the good message *about him* should receive from *those who hear that message* what they need to live on.

¹⁵ However, I have not requested that you *give me* those things that I have a right *to receive from you*. Furthermore, I am writing this to you, not in order to request you to begin *giving me financial help now*. I would rather die than to *receive help from you*. I do not want anyone to prevent me from boasting *about my proclaiming God's message to you without receiving financial help from you*. ¹⁶ When I proclaim the message about Christ, I cannot boast *about doing it*, because *Christ* has commanded me *to do it*. I would be very miserable (OR, *I am afraid that God would punish me*) if I did not proclaim that message. ¹⁷ If I had decided by myself to proclaim it, *God would reward me*. But I did not decide by myself to do that. I am simply doing the work that *God entrusted to me*. ¹⁸ So <perhaps you wonder *what my reward is*?/are you wondering *what my reward is*?> [RHQ] *I will tell you*. When I proclaim the good message *about Christ*, I do not ask people for financial help. It *makes me very happy not to ask for help, and being happy is the reward* I get. I do not want to use the rights that I have *when I proclaim* the good message.

1 Corinthians 9:19-27

THEME: *I have adopted the code of conduct of whatever group I have been among, in order to bring more people to Christ.*

¹⁹ I am not obligated to do what anyone else thinks that I should do. Nevertheless, when I have been with any group of people, I have made myself *do what they believed that I should do, just like a slave does what his master wants him to do*. I have done that in order that I might convince more people *to trust in Christ*. ²⁰ Specifically, when I was with fellow Jews, I did the things that Jews *think that people should do*. I did that in order that I might convince some of them *to trust in Christ*. Although I am now not obligated to obey the Jewish laws and rituals, when I was with those who believe that they are obligated to obey those laws, I did the things that they *think that people should do*. I did that in order to convince some of them *to trust in Christ*. ²¹ When I was with <non-Jews/those who do not know those laws>, I did the things that non-Jews *think that people should do*, in order that I might convince some of them *to trust in Christ*. I do not mean that I disobey God's laws. No, I obey the things that Christ commanded us to do. ²² When I was with those who doubt *whether God will permit them to do certain things that others* <*disapprove of/think it is not right to do*>, I *avoided doing those things*, in order that I might convince some of them *to trust in Christ*. In summary, I have done all the things *that the people I have been with think that others should do*, in order that by every possible means I might convince some of them *to trust in Christ*. ²³ I do all these things in order that *more people will believe* the message about Christ, and in order that I, along with other believers, may receive the good things *that God promises to give us*.

²⁴ When people run in a race, they all run, but only one of them wins the race and as a result gets a prize. <You certainly know that./Do you not know that?> [RHQ] So, *just like runners exert themselves fully to win a race* [MET], *you should exert yourselves fully to do the things that God wants you to do*, in order that you may receive the reward *that God wants to give you*. ²⁵ All athletes exercise their bodies strenuously in many ways. They do that in order to receive a wreath as a *reward to wear on their heads*. Those wreaths fade, but we will receive a reward that will last forever [LIT]. ²⁶ For that reason, I *try hard to please God* [MET], *like a runner who runs toward the goal* [LIT]. I *try hard to accomplish what God wants me to accomplish, like a boxer tries hard to hit his opponent, not to miss hitting him*. ²⁷ I beat my body *to make it do what I want it to do* [MET], as slaves *obey their masters*, in order that, after I have proclaimed *God's message* to others, he will not say *that I do not deserve to receive a reward*.

1 Corinthians 10:1-5

THEME: *Our Jewish ancestors all experienced God's power, but almost all of them died in the desert because they sinned against him.*

10 ¹ My fellow believers, I want to remind you that **all** our *Jewish* ancestors were under the cloud *by which God miraculously led them and protected them when they left Egypt with Moses*. **All** those ancestors crossed the Red Sea *after God miraculously made the water separate so that they could walk through it*. ² God caused **all** of them to begin to live under the authority of [MTY] Moses *when they walked under that cloud and walked through the Red Sea*. ³ **All** those ancestors of ours ate *the same food that God miraculously provided*. ⁴ They **all** drank water that God miraculously provided. That is, they all drank water that God miraculously made come out of the rock. That rock was a *symbol of* [MET] Christ, who went with them. So we conclude that *God helped all of those people in many ways*. ⁵ However, we also conclude that God was angry [LIT] with **most** of those people *because they sinned against him*. He caused *almost all of them to die, and as a result their bodies were scattered in the desert*.

1 Corinthians 10:6-13

THEME: *What happened to our Jewish ancestors was a warning of what will happen to us if we give in to temptation.*

⁶ Those things *that happened long ago* became examples to teach us *the following things*: We should not desire to do evil things as those people desired to do. ⁷ We should not worship idols as many of those people did. *Remember that Moses wrote, "The people sat down. They ate and drank to honor the golden calf that they had just made. Then they got up to dance immorally."* ⁸ We should not have sexual relations with someone to whom we are not married, as many of them did. As a result, God *punished them* by causing twenty-three thousand people to die in *only one day*. ⁹ We should not try to see how much we can sin without the Lord punishing us. Some of them did that, and as a result they died because *poisonous snakes bit them*. ¹⁰ We should not complain *about what God does*. Some of them did that, and as a result an angel destroyed them. *So God will certainly punish us if we sin like they did.*

¹¹ All those things *that happened to our ancestors long ago* are examples for us. *Moses wrote those things to warn us who are living now.* We are the people for whom God has fulfilled *the things that he purposed* in the previous periods of time.

¹² So *I say this* to all those who confidently *think that they will always steadfastly continue to believe what God said and will never disobey what he commanded*: Be careful that you(sg) do not sin *when you are tempted*. ¹³ *Remember that your desires to sin are the same desires that other people have.* But when you are tempted to sin, you can trust God *to help you*. He will not permit you to be tempted {anything to tempt you} more than you are able to resist. Instead, when you are tempted {things tempt you}, he will also provide a way *for you* to endure it *without sinning*.

1 Corinthians 10:14-22

THEME: *God will punish us if we participate in demon worship by eating food sacrificed to demons when we eat the Lord's Supper.*

¹⁴ So, *I say to you* people whom I love, *avoid* worshipping idols *just like you would* run away from *anything that is dangerous*. ¹⁵ It is to people who *think that they are wise* that I write. So, **you**, as wise people, judge whether what I am writing *is true*. ¹⁶ *During the Lord's Supper, after we ask God to bless <the wine/the grape juice> in the cup*, we give thanks for it *and drink it*. By doing that, we certainly are [RHQ] sharing in what Christ *did for us* when his blood *flowed from his body when he died*. *During the Lord's Supper, when we break the bread and eat it*, <we are certainly sharing in [MTY] what Christ *did for us* when his body *suffered for us on the cross*./are we not sharing in [MTY] what Christ *did for us* when his body *suffered for us on the cross*?> [RHQ] ¹⁷ Because it is one loaf of bread that we *break and eat during the Lord's Supper*, it *symbolizes that* we who are many are one group, because we all eat from the one loaf.

¹⁸ Consider *what happens when* the Israelite people *eat the food that the priests sacrifice on the altar outside the Temple*. <They participate in *what the priests do at* [MTY] the altar./Are they not participating in *what the priests do at* [MTY] the altar?> [RHQ] *Similarly, if you eat food that non-believers have offered to an idol in a temple, you are participating in their worship of the idol there*. ¹⁹ By saying that, <*I do not mean that offering food to an idol makes it anything more than just ordinary food./do I mean that offering food to an idol makes it anything more than just ordinary food?*> [RHQ] I do not mean that an idol is anything *more than just an idol*. ²⁰ No! Instead, I mean that what people *sacrifice to idols*, they are sacrificing to demons, not to God. So, *if you eat food that has been sacrificed to idols, you are participating in worshipping the demons that the idols represent*. And I do not want you to participate in worshipping demons! ²¹ When you drink the *grape juice/wine in* [MTY] the cup *at the Lord's Supper*, you cannot participate in the *blessings that* the Lord *Jesus* brought to us and at the same time drink the *wine in the* [MTY] cup that people offer to demons! When you eat at the Lord's table, you cannot participate in the blessings the Lord provided [MTY] when he died for us and at the same time participate in the things that represent demons *by eating food that has been sacrificed to idols!* ²² *If you participate in honoring demons in that way*, <you will certainly make the Lord very angry./will not you make the Lord very angry?> [RHQ] <Remember that you are certainly not stronger than he is./Do you think that you are stronger than he is?> [RHQ] *Certainly not, so you will not escape his punishing you if you honor demons in that way!*

1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

THEME: *It is all right to eat food offered to idols, but we should not do so if it would offend those who think that it is wrong.*

²³ *Some people say, "God permits believers to do anything."* But *I say that* not everything that people do benefits *those who do it!* Yes, *some people say, "God permits believers to do all things."* But not everything that people do helps them to become *spiritually* mature. ²⁴ No one should try to benefit *only* himself. Instead, each person should try to benefit other people *spiritually*. ²⁵ *This is what you should do*: Eat any food that is sold {that people sell} in the market. Do not ask questions to *find out if that food has been offered {someone offered that food} to idols, just* because you think it would be wrong to *eat such food*. ²⁶ *Remember that the Psalmist wrote, "Everything on the earth belongs to the Lord God because he created it!"* So, *food that has been offered to idols belongs to the Lord, not to the idols*. ²⁷ If a non-believer invites you to a meal, go if you want to, and eat any food that is set {that he sets} before you. Do not ask *whether it was offered to idols, just* because you think that it would be wrong to *eat such food*. ²⁸ But if someone says to you, "This is food that was sacrificed to an idol," do not eat it, for the sake of the person who told that to you, and also because someone may think that it is wrong to *eat such food*. ²⁹ I do not mean that **you should be concerned about whether it is all right to eat such food**. What I mean is that you should be concerned about **others** who may think that it is wrong to eat such food. Since I know that I <am free/have the right> to *eat such food without God punishing me*, no one should [RHQ] say that what I am

doing is wrong just because he himself thinks that it is wrong.³⁰ If I thank God for the food when I eat *food that has been offered to an idol*, no one should criticize me for eating food for which I have thanked God [RHQ]!

³¹ So I say to you in conclusion, when you eat *food*, or drink *something*, or do anything else, do **everything** in order that *people will* praise God. ³² Do not do anything that would hinder Jews or Greeks *from becoming believers*, and do not do things that would encourage members of God's congregations to sin. ³³ *Do as I do*. I try to please everyone in every way. I do this by not seeking to benefit myself. Instead, I try to benefit many others, in order that they may be saved {that God may save them} *from the guilt of their sins*.

11 ¹ Follow my example, just like I try to follow Christ's example.

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

THEME: *Women should wear a hair covering while praying or prophesying in a service, but men should not do so.*

² I praise you because you remember all the things *that I taught you* and because you follow the instructions that I gave you. You have done just like I told you to do. ³ Now, I want you to know that the one who has authority over [MTY] every man is Christ, and the ones who have authority over women are men (OR, their husbands), and the one who has authority over Christ is God. ⁴ So if any man *wears a covering over his head* when he prays or speaks a message God gave him, he disgraces himself [SYN]. ⁵ Also, if any woman does not wear a covering over her head when she prays or speaks a message that God gave her, she disgraces herself (OR, she dishonors her husband). That would be acting like [SIM] *women who are ashamed because their heads have been shaved*. ⁶ So, if women do not wear coverings over their heads *when they pray or speak messages that God gave them*, they should let someone shave their heads *so that they will be ashamed*. But since women are ashamed if someone cuts their hair *short* or shaves off their hair, they should wear coverings over their heads *when they pray or speak messages that God gave them*. ⁷ Men should not wear coverings over their heads *when they pray or speak messages that God gave them*, because they represent what God is like [MET] and they show how great God is. But women show how great men (OR, their husbands) are. ⁸ Remember that God intends that *men have authority over women*. We know that because God did not make *the first man, Adam*, from the *first woman, Eve*. Instead, he made that woman *from a bone that he took from the man*. ⁹ Also, God did not create *the first man to help the woman*. Instead, he created the woman *to help the man*. ¹⁰ For that reason, women should wear something to cover their heads *as a symbol of their being under their husbands'* [MTY] authority. They should also *cover their heads* so that the angels will see that and rejoice.

¹¹⁻¹² However, remember that *even though God created the first woman from the first man, now it is women who give birth to men*. So men cannot be independent of women, nor can women be independent of men. But all things, *including men and women*, come from God. ¹³ Consider this for yourselves: Is it proper for [RHQ] women to pray to God while they do not have coverings over their heads? ¹⁴ <Everyone senses that it is disgraceful for men to have long hair./Do you not know naturally that it is disgraceful for men to have long hair?> [RHQ] ¹⁵ But it is very delightful if women have long hair, because God gave them long hair to be like a covering *for their heads*. ¹⁶ But whoever wants to argue *with me about my saying that women should have a covering over their heads when they pray or speak a message from God should consider the fact that we apostles do not permit any other custom, and the other congregations of God do not have any other custom*.

1 Corinthians 11:17-22

THEME *When you gather to eat the Lord's Supper, you act selfishly. I cannot praise you for that.*

¹⁷ Concerning the matters *about which I will instruct you now*, I do not praise you, because whenever you believers meet together, good *things do not happen*. Instead, **bad things happen**. ¹⁸ First of all, people have told me that when you gather together as a group *to worship God*, you divide into groups *that are hostile to each other*. To some extent I believe that is true. ¹⁹ It seems that you must divide into *groups that despise each other* in order that it might be clear/evident which people among you God approves of! ²⁰ When you gather together, you [IRO] eat the meal *that you say is to remember the death of the Lord Jesus for us*. ²¹ But *what happens when you eat* is that each person eats his own meal before *he thinks about sharing his food with anyone else*. As a result, *when the meal is over*, some people are *still* hungry and others are drunk! *So it is not a meal that honors the Lord*. ²² <You act as though you do not have your own houses in which you can eat and drink *whatever you want to*!/Do you not have your own houses in which you can eat and drink *whatever you want to*?> [RHQ] Do you not realize [RHQ] *that by acting selfishly in this way*, it is God's people whom you are despising, and it is the poor people *in your group* whom you are treating as though they were not important? What shall I say to you about that [RHQ]? Do you expect me to praise you *about what you do* [RHQ]? I certainly will not praise you!

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

THEME: *The Lord gave us instructions about the significance of the Lord's Supper.*

²³ The Lord taught me these things that I also taught you: During the night that Jesus was betrayed {*Judas enabled the enemies of the Lord Jesus to seize him*}, he took some bread. ²⁴ After he thanked God for it, he broke it into pieces. *Then he gave it to his disciples* and said, "This bread *represents* [MET] (OR, is) my body, that *I am about to sacrifice* for you. Eat bread in this way *again and again* to remember my *offering myself as a sacrifice for you*." ²⁵ Similarly, after they ate their

meal, he took a cup [MTY] of wine. He thanked God for it. Then he gave it to his disciples, saying, “The wine in [MTY] this cup represents [MET] (OR, is) my blood that will flow from my body <to put into effect/to establish> the new agreement that God is making with people. Whenever you drink wine in this way, do it to remember that my blood flowed for you.”²⁶ Remember that until the Lord Jesus returns to the earth, whenever you eat the bread that represents his body and drink the wine [MTY] that represents his blood, you are telling other people that he died for you.

1 Corinthians 11:27-34

THEME: *God punishes those who eat the Lord’s Supper in a way that does not express the unity of his people.*

²⁷ So, those who eat this bread and drink this wine [MTY] in a way that is not proper for those who belong to the Lord are guilty of acting in a way that is contrary to what our Lord intended when he offered his body as a sacrifice and his blood flowed when he died.²⁸ Before any believer eats that bread and drinks that wine [MTY], he should think carefully about what he is doing,²⁹ because if anyone eats the bread that represents Christ’s body and drinks the wine that represents his blood without recognizing that all God’s people should be united, God will punish him for doing that.³⁰ Many people in your group are weak and sick, and several have died [EUP] because of the way they acted when they ate that bread and drank that wine.³¹ If we would think carefully about what we are doing, God would not judge and punish us like that.³² But when the Lord judges and punishes us for acting wrongly, he disciplines us to correct us, in order that he will not need to punish us when he punishes the people who do not trust in Christ [MTY].

³³ So, my fellow believers, when you gather together to eat food to remember the Lord’s dying for you, wait until everyone has arrived so that you can find out who does not have enough food.³⁴ Those who are so hungry that they cannot wait to eat until everyone else has arrived should eat in their own homes first, in order that when you gather together God will not judge and punish them for <being inconsiderate of/not being concerned about> others.

And when I come to Corinth I will give you instructions about other matters concerning the Lord’s Supper.

1 Corinthians 12:1-3

THEME: *It is only God’s Spirit who enables people to say that Jesus is Lord.*

12 ¹ Now, my fellow believers, I will answer what you asked about the things God’s Spirit enables believers to do. I want you to know clearly [LIT] about these things.² You know that before you became Christians, various things led you to worship idols, which are unable to tell you any of God’s message.³ So the first thing that I will tell you now is that it is not the Spirit of God who would cause anyone to say, “Jesus deserved to die,” and that the Holy Spirit is the only one who can enable anyone to say, “Jesus is truly the Lord.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

THEME: *God’s Spirit gives believers special abilities as he desires.*

⁴ There are various things that God’s Spirit enables us believers to do, but it is that same Spirit who enables all of us to do them.⁵ There are many different ways to serve the Lord, but it is the same Lord whom we all are serving.⁶ We believers have the power to do various tasks, but it is the same God who gives all of us the power to do these things.

⁷ God’s Spirit gives his power to each believer in order to benefit all the other believers.⁸ To some, the Spirit gives the ability to speak very wise messages. To others, the same Spirit gives the ability to know things that he reveals to them.⁹ To others, the same Spirit gives the ability to believe that God will work miracles. To others, the Spirit gives the ability to heal sick people.¹⁰ To others, he gives the power to perform miracles. To others, he gives the ability to speak messages that come directly from God. To others, he gives the ability to tell if a message is really from God or not. To others he gives the ability to speak messages in languages [MTY] that they have not learned. To others, he gives the ability to tell the meaning of those messages [MTY].¹¹ It is the same one Spirit who gives all these abilities. He gives whatever abilities he wants to give, to whatever person he wants to give them.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

THEME: *A congregation needs all the abilities that God’s Spirit gives to its members, but you should especially desire the ones that help others the most.*

¹² Although a person’s body has many parts, all the parts form just one body [DOU]. It is like that with those who belong to Christ.¹³ When we were baptized {When people baptized us}, the one Holy Spirit caused us to become one group of believers. It does not matter whether we are Jews or non-Jews. It does not matter whether we are slaves or not slaves. When we believed in Christ, the one Spirit came to live [MET] within all of us.

¹⁴ Our bodies do not have only one part. They have many parts with various functions.¹⁵ If our foot could talk and say to us, “Because I am not your hand, I am not a part of your body,” it would still be a part of our body.¹⁶ If our ear could talk and say, “Because I am not your eye, I am not a part of your body,” it would still be a part of our body.¹⁷ If our body were only an eye, <we would not be able to hear./how could we hear?> [RHQ] If our body were only an ear, <we would not be able

to smell *anything!*/how could we smell *anything?*> [RHQ] ¹⁸ But the truth is that God has put all the parts of our bodies together exactly as he wanted to put them. ¹⁹ If *our body* had only one part, <it would not be a body./how would it be a body?> [RHQ] ²⁰ But the truth is that there are many parts *in our body*, but it is still only one body. ²¹ That is why if our eye *could talk*, it should never say to our hand, "I do not need you!" And if our head *could talk*, it should not say to our feet, "I do not need you!" ²² Instead, the parts of our body that seem to be weaker are the ones that are absolutely necessary. ²³ And the parts that we do not think highly of are the parts that we clothe carefully. And we protect carefully those parts that we do not show to people. ²⁴ The parts that are *all right* to show people, we do not need to protect. Instead, **God**, who has put all the parts of our bodies together, causes us to care for in a special way the parts that we think are less important. ²⁵ He does that in order that all the parts of our body will work together harmoniously [LIT], and so that all the parts will care for all the other parts equally. ²⁶ If one part of our body hurts, *it is as though* all the parts of our body are hurting. If we pay special attention to one part of our body, *it is as though* all the parts of our body feel pleasure [MET].

²⁷ *Everything I have just said about how the parts of our bodies relate to each other applies to how all of you who belong to Christ should relate to each other.* Each of you belongs to him, *but you have not all been given the same abilities and work.*

²⁸ God has placed apostles in our congregations. Apostles are first *in rank*. Next *in rank* are those who speak messages which come directly from God. Next *in rank* are those who teach *spiritual truth*. Then there are those who have the power to work miracles, those who have the ability to heal *sick people*, those who have the ability to help *others*, those who have the ability to govern *the affairs of the congregation*, and those who have the ability to speak *messages* in languages [MTY] *that they have not learned*. ²⁹ <Certainly not all *believers* are apostles./Are all *believers* apostles?> [RHQ] <They all do not have the ability to speak messages that come directly from God./Do they all have the ability to speak messages that come directly from God?> [RHQ] <They do not all have the ability to teach *spiritual truth*./Do they all have the ability to teach *spiritual truth*?> [RHQ] <They do not all have the power to work miracles./Do they all have the power to work miracles?> [RHQ] <They do not all have the ability to heal people./Do they all have the ability to heal people?> [RHQ] <They do not all have the ability to speak *messages* in languages [MTY] *they have not learned*./Do they all have the ability to speak *messages* in languages [MTY] *that they have not learned*?> [RHQ] <They do not all have the ability to tell others the meaning of those messages./Do they all have the ability to tell others the meaning of those messages?> [RHQ] *Certainly not!* ³¹ But you should eagerly desire to have *the abilities that will help other believers* the most (OR, *the abilities that God considers* to be the most important). But now I will tell you the best way *to use the abilities that God's Spirit has given you*.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

THEME: *We should use the abilities that God's Spirit has given us in ways that show that we love others.*

13 ¹ If we could speak *all* the various languages [MTY] that people *in the world speak* and even speak *the language* that angels *speak*, if we did not love *others*, *speaking those languages* would be *as useless as beating* a brass gong or clanging cymbals *together*. ² If we had the ability to speak messages that come directly from God, and if we could understand the plans that he has not yet revealed to *others*, and if we could know everything *about everything*, and if we believed in God so strongly that we could *do impossible things like* causing mountains to move, if we did not love *others*, *God would consider all that* to be worthless. ³ If we would give everything that we own to poor people, and if we would let others kill us in order that we could boast about *sacrificing our own bodies*, if we did not love *others*, we would not get any reward *from God*.

⁴ Those who [PRS] truly love *others* act patiently and kindly toward them. Those who [PRS] truly love *others* are not jealous of them, they do not boast *about what they themselves have done*, and are not proud. ⁵ Those who [PRS] truly love *others* do not act in disgraceful/disrespectful ways towards them. They do not <act selfishly/think only of themselves and what they want>. They do not quickly become angry. They do not keep remembering the bad things *that others have done to them*. ⁶ Those who [PRS] truly love *others* do not rejoice when *people do* evil things, but they do rejoice when *people act* righteously. ⁷ Those who truly love *others* patiently endure *the faults of others*. They do not quickly assume *that others have done something bad*. They confidently expect *that others will act righteously*. They patiently endure *all their own troubles*.

⁸ We should never [PRS] let anything stop us from continuing to love *others*. As for the ability to speak messages that come directly from God, some day that will come to an end. As for the ability to speak languages [MTY] *that we have not learned*, that will *also* come to an end some day. And as for the ability to know things that God reveals to us, that will come to an end some day *because it will not be necessary anymore*. ⁹ God does not reveal everything to us, and we cannot know everything that he knows. ¹⁰ But when everything is perfect *after Christ returns*, things which are not perfect *now, such as the abilities which God's Spirit gives us*, will <be abolished/come to an end>. ¹¹ When we were children, we talked like children talk, we thought like children think, we reasoned like children reason. But when we grew up, we got rid of our childish ways [MET]. *Similarly, you need to get rid of your childish thinking about the abilities that the Spirit has given you.* ¹² In this life we do not understand everything fully. It is like [MET] looking at something indirectly by seeing it in a mirror. But *when we get to heaven* [MTY], we will *understand everything clearly*. *It will be like* talking to someone face to face. Now we know only part of *everything that God wants us to know*. Then we will know everything completely, just like *God* knows us completely. ¹³ So now there are three things *that we must continue to do*: To trust *in God*, to confidently expect to receive *what he will give us*, and to love *others*. But the greatest of those three things is loving *others*.

1 Corinthians 14:1-25

THEME: *Speaking messages that come directly from God will help believers much more than speaking messages in unknown languages.*

14 ¹You must want to love others more *than you want anything else*. But you should *also* eagerly desire the abilities that God's Spirit gives to believers. And you should desire most of all to have the ability to speak messages that come directly from God [MTY]. ²⁻³*I say that* because those who speak messages that come directly from God *are speaking in languages that they and the other believers in the congregation know, and thus* they are able to strengthen them *spiritually* and to encourage and comfort them. But those who speak in languages [MTY] *that they have not learned* are not speaking to people. Instead, they are *only* speaking to God. No one understands them. By *the power/guidance of God's Spirit* (OR, From within *their own* spirit) they speak things that others do not know. ⁴Those who speak in languages *that they have not learned* are receiving a blessing for themselves, but those who speak messages that come directly from God are giving a blessing to *all the believers in the congregation because they are speaking in a language that the congregation knows*.

⁵I would like you all to have the ability to speak in languages [MTY] *you have not learned*. But I would like even more for you to have the ability to speak messages that come directly from God. If people speak messages in a language that they have not learned, if there is no one there who can explain the meaning, that situation is not as helpful to the congregation as speaking messages that come directly from God *in the language that the congregation knows*.

⁶My fellow believers, suppose that I came to you and spoke to you in a language that none of you knows *and I did not explain the meaning of what I told you*. Even if I told you something that God had revealed to me, or told you some message that had come directly from him, or taught you something that you needed to know, *that certainly would not help you! / how would that help you?* > [RHQ] ⁷*It is like* lifeless musical instruments, like flutes and harps for example. When they are played, if the notes are not played {if *those playing those instruments* do not play the notes} clearly, *no one will know what tune is being played {what tune they are playing}*. / how will anyone know what tune is being played {what tune they are playing}? > [RHQ] ⁸If someone playing the trumpet *wants to signal that the soldiers should prepare to fight a battle, no one will know what tune is being played {what tune they are playing}*. / how will anyone know what tune is being played {what tune they are playing}? > [RHQ] ⁹It is the same with you! If you do not speak words that other people can understand, *no one will know what you are saying. / how will anyone know what you are saying?* > [RHQ] *It will be as though* you are just speaking to the air! ¹⁰There are many different languages in the world, and all of them convey meaning [LIT] *to the people who know those languages*. ¹¹But if we do not understand the language that others are speaking, *it will be as though* they are foreigners to us, and we will be foreigners to them. ¹²So *I say this to you*: Because you are eager to have the abilities that God's Spirit gives, earnestly desire those abilities that will do the most to help *all the believers in the congregation*.

¹³So, those who have the ability to speak in languages [MTY] *that they have not learned* should pray that *God will give them the ability to explain the meaning of what they say*. ¹⁴If they pray in a language [MTY] *that they have not learned*, their spirits are praying, but they are not using their minds. ¹⁵So I will tell you [RHQ] what we should do. *At times* we may pray, *using only our spirits, in languages we have not learned. And at other times* we should pray using our minds, *thinking about the words that we are praying. Similarly, at times* we may sing using only our spirits, using languages that we have not learned, and at other times we should sing using our minds, *thinking about the words that we are singing*. ¹⁶Suppose that any one of you praises God (OR, thanks God for what he has done), using only your(sg) spirit *and not using your mind*. Maybe some people *will be present who* do not know about *the abilities that God's Spirit gives to believers*. Because they do not know what you are saying, after you thank God, they will not [RHQ] know when to say "Amen! / I agree!" ¹⁷You may be thanking God very well, but you are not helping them. ¹⁸I thank God that I speak in languages [MTY] *that I have not learned* more than any of you do. ¹⁹But during a worship service, *in order that others will understand what I am saying*, I would prefer to speak five words using my mind, in order that I may teach others, rather than to speak ten thousand words in a language [MTY] *that is not understood by the congregation*.

²⁰My fellow believers, stop being like little children in the way that you think *about these abilities that God's Spirit gives*. Instead, think about them in a mature way. If you really want to be like little children, do as few wicked things as babies do!

²¹*When the Jews long ago refused to obey God, he warned them about what would happen when he allowed their enemies to punish them*. In the Scriptures it is written {*the prophet Isaiah wrote*} what the Lord God said *about that*,

I will send people from foreign lands to attack my people.

Those foreigners will speak languages that my people do not know [DOU].

In that way, I will warn my people,

but they will still not pay attention to what I say.

²²If we speak in languages [MTY] *that we have not learned*, unbelievers *who are there will realize that the Spirit of God is truly among us*. That will warn them *that they need to fear God*. But believers do not need such a warning. ²³Suppose during the worship service everyone started to speak in languages [MTY] *that they have not learned*. If unbelievers or people who do not know *about the abilities that God's Spirit gives to believers* come in *and hear that*, *they will surely think that you are crazy. / will they not think that you are crazy?* > [RHQ] ²⁴But if an unbeliever or someone who does not know *about those abilities* comes in while all of you believers are *one by one* speaking messages that come directly from God, everything that you say will show that person that he is a sinner and that *God will punish him if he does not turn from his sinful behavior*. ²⁵He will realize that *God knows the evil things that he has done that other people do not know*. Then he will kneel down and worship God and say, "God is truly among you!"

1 Corinthians 14:26-40

THEME: *Believers should all be prepared to participate in an orderly way during worship services.*

²⁶ So, my fellow believers, I will tell you [RHQ] what I think that you should be doing. When you come together *to worship God*, some of you may have a hymn to sing. Others may have something to teach *the congregation*. Others may have *something to say that God has revealed* to them. Others may give messages in languages *that they have not learned*. Others will explain the meaning of those messages. Make sure that all of these things that you do will make the congregation become more mature spiritually. ²⁷ *It is all right* if two people, or at the most three people, speak in languages [MTY] *that they have not learned*. But they must speak one at a time, and someone must explain the meaning of what the others have said. ²⁸ *If those who want to speak in a language that they have not learned realize that there is no one there who will be able to explain the meaning of what they will say*, they should not speak in that language during the meeting. Instead, they should speak to God by themselves, *somewhere else*.

²⁹ *During a meeting*, two or three people should speak messages that come directly from God, and others who are there should think carefully about what those people have said. ³⁰ If someone receives a new message directly from God while someone else is speaking, the one who is speaking should stop speaking *and let the other person tell what God has revealed to him*. ³¹ You can all, one by one, speak messages that have come directly from God, in order that you can teach others and all be encouraged {encourage everyone}. ³² Those who speak messages that come directly from God are in control of their own spirits, *so they can wait for their turn to speak*. ³³ Remember that God does not desire that things be done in a disorderly way *during your worship services*. Instead, he desires that everything be done in an orderly way.

Just like it happens in all the other congregations of believers, ³⁴ the women should not be permitted {do not permit the women} *to interrupt the meeting by asking questions*. They must keep quiet. They must be subject *to their husbands*. What Moses wrote [PRS] *about how God created the first two people* suggests *that the women should do that*. ³⁵ If they want to know *more* about something *that a speaker said*, they should ask their husbands when they get home, for it is disgraceful for women *to interrupt a service by asking such questions*. ³⁶ *If you do not agree with these things that I have been telling you*, remember that [RHQ] the message from God did not first come from you *people in Corinth*. Also, you are not [RHQ] the only ones who have heard it! *Many others have heard it and accepted it, so you should act as the believers in other places act*. ³⁷ Those of you who think that they have the ability to speak messages that come directly from God, or think that they have some other ability *that God's Spirit gives*, should realize that the things that I have written about in this letter are things that the Lord has commanded. ³⁸ But if they are not willing to accept *my authority*, God will not accept them (OR, they will not be accepted *by the congregation*).

³⁹ So, my fellow believers, be eager to speak messages that come directly from God, and do not prevent anyone from speaking in a language *that he has not learned*. ⁴⁰ But make sure *that everything* that you do *during the worship services* is done in a proper and orderly way.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

THEME: *I was not worthy to become an apostle, but the Lord Jesus committed to me the message about his death and resurrection.*

15 ¹ Now, my fellow believers, I want to remind you about the message about Christ that I preached to you. It is the message that you received and that you have continued to trust firmly. ² If you keep on firmly *believing* this message that I preached to you, you will be saved {God will save you}. If you do not continue to believe it, your believing *in Christ* was <all for nothing/useless>!

³ The most important part of the message that I received *from the Lord Jesus*, and that I told you, was this: Christ died to *take away the guilt* of our sins, as the Scriptures *said that he would do*. ⁴ His *body* was buried {They buried his *body*}. On the third day *after that*, he was raised {God caused him to become alive} again, as the Scriptures *said would happen*. ⁵ After that, *Christ was seen by* {appeared to} Peter. Then he appeared to *ten of the twelve apostles*. ⁶ Later he was seen by {appeared to} more than five hundred of our fellow believers. Most of those are still living, but some of them have died [EUP]. ⁷ Then he was seen by {appeared to} *his younger brother James, who became the leader of the congregation in Jerusalem*. Then he appeared to all of the apostles. ⁸ Finally, he was seen by {appeared to} me, but I became an apostle in a way that was very unusual [MET]. ⁹ The fact is, I *consider that I* am the least important of the apostles. I do not deserve to be an apostle, because I <persecuted God's groups of believers/caused God's groups of believers to suffer> *everywhere I went*. ¹⁰ But it is because God acted kindly toward me in ways that I did not deserve that I became what I am now. And his acting kindly toward me produced a great result [LIT], which is that I worked harder *for Christ* than all the other apostles. But it was not that I *was working with my own ability*. Instead, God was helping me in a way I did not deserve. ¹¹ So it does not matter whether it was I *who was preaching* or *whether it was the other apostles who were preaching*. We all preached *the same message*, and that message is what you believed.

1 Corinthians 15:12-34

THEME: *Christ has truly risen from the dead, and he will some day raise all believers.*

¹² So now *let me ask you this*: Since we have all preached to you that Christ was raised again {that God caused Christ to become alive} after he died, <no one among you should be saying that God will not cause *believers* to become alive again

after they die! why do some of you say that *God* will not cause *believers* to become alive again after they die? [RHQ] ¹³ If it is true that *God* will not cause **anyone** to become alive again, that situation would mean that Christ was not raised from the dead {*he* did not cause Christ to become alive again!} ¹⁴ And if Christ was not raised from the dead {if *God* did not cause Christ to become alive again}, then what we preached to you was useless, and your believing in *Christ* is useless. ¹⁵ If it is true that no one will be raised from the dead {that *God* will not cause anyone to become alive again after he dies}, we(*exc*) have been guilty of lying to you about *God*, because we told you that *God* caused Christ to become alive again. ¹⁶ But if it were really true that no one who has died will be raised {that *God* will not cause anyone who has died to become alive} again, then Christ was not raised {*he* did not cause Christ to become alive} again either! ¹⁷ If it were true that Christ was not raised {that *God* did not cause Christ to become alive} again after he died, you have believed in Christ for nothing, because *God* will still *punish* you for [MTY] your sins. ¹⁸ And those people who died [EUP] while they were trusting in Christ will go to hell. ¹⁹ In this life many of us have suffered much for Christ because we confidently expect that he will reward us in heaven. If we have confidently expected this in vain, people should pity us more than they pity anyone else!

²⁰ But the truth is that Christ has been raised from the dead {that *God* has caused Christ to live again after he had died}, and <that guarantees/because of that, it is certain> [MET] that he will also cause those *believers* who have died [EUP] to become alive again. ²¹ What **one man**, Adam, did affects us all. We all die. Similarly, what **one man**—Christ—did affects us(*inc*) all: *God* will cause all *believers* to become alive again. ²² Because of what Adam did, all of us who are descended from him die. Similarly, because of what Christ did, all of us who have a close relationship with him will be made {*God* will make all of us who have a close relationship with Christ} alive after we die. ²³ But we must all take our turn. *God* raised Christ first [MET]. And when Christ returns, *God* will cause those who belong to Christ to become alive again. ²⁴ Then, after Christ has destroyed all [DOU] the evil powers that oppose *God*, the world will end. Then Christ will let *God*, his Father, completely rule over his kingdom. ²⁵ You must realize that Christ must rule over that kingdom until he has completely defeated [MTY] all his enemies. ²⁶ The last thing that he will get rid of is death. But he certainly will get rid of death, which is like an enemy to us. ²⁷ In the Scriptures the Psalmist wrote that *God* will cause everything to be under Christ's authority [MTY]. But it is clear that the word 'everything' here does not include *God*, because *God* is the one who will cause everything to be under Christ's authority [MTY]. ²⁸ After everything is put under the authority of *God*'s Son, then he will put himself completely under the authority of *God*, the one who gave him that authority. Then *God* will be completely in control of everything [IDM], everywhere.

²⁹ Now think about this: Some among you are being baptized (OR, are baptizing people) on behalf of those who died before someone baptized them (OR, who died before they became believers). If, as some people say, *believers* will not be raised from the dead {*God* will not cause *believers* to become alive again}, <what is the value in those people doing that?/there is no value in those people doing that!> [RHQ] If *God* will not cause any *believers* to become alive again, <it is senseless to be baptized {baptize anyone} on behalf of someone who has died./why would someone be baptized {baptize anyone} on behalf of someone who has died?> [RHQ] ³⁰ Furthermore, if *God* will not cause us *believers* to become alive again, it is [RHQ] very foolish for me and the other apostles to be constantly putting ourselves in danger because we tell people *God*'s good message! ³¹ My fellow believers, every day I am in danger of being killed {people killing me}! That is as true as it is that I am pleased with you because of your close relationship with Christ Jesus our Lord. ³² If *God* will not cause us *believers* to become alive again after we die, <I will receive no benefit at all from having opposed those who attacked me so strongly in Ephesus city./what will I gain from having opposed those who attacked me so strongly in Ephesus city?> [RHQ] They were fighting me like wild beasts! If we *believers* will not be raised from the dead {If *God* will not cause us *believers* to live again}, we might as well say as people often say: "Tomorrow we are going to die, so we might as well enjoy now everything that we can. We might as well feast and get drunk!" ³³ Do not let yourselves be deceived by those who say that *God* will not cause *believers* to live again {Do not let people who say that *God* will not cause *believers* to live again deceive you}. If you associate with evil people who say such things, they will <influence you to do evil things/destroy your good moral way of living>. ³⁴ Start thinking correctly again about these matters, as you should, and stop your sinful behavior which has resulted from your wrong thinking. I say that because it seems that some among you do not know *God*, and as a result they have this wrong thinking. I say that to make you ashamed.

1 Corinthians 15:35-58

THEME: In heaven we will have glorious indestructible bodies.

³⁵ But some of you are asking, "How will dead people be raised {How will *God* cause dead people to become alive} again? What kind of bodies will they have?" ³⁶ Anyone who asks such questions is foolish. You know that a seed that is planted in the ground must completely change its form [MET] before it sprouts. ³⁷ A seed, such as a wheat seed, is very different from the plant that sprouts from it. ³⁸ *God* gives everything that lives the form that he desires. He gives each seed its own form. ³⁹ Similarly, people, animals, birds, and fish all have flesh, but each one has a different kind of flesh. ⁴⁰ Also, there are angelic beings in heaven (OR, stars and planets in the sky), and there are people with bodies on the earth. The angelic beings (OR, stars and planets) are beautiful in one way, and people on earth are beautiful in a different way. ⁴¹ The sun is bright in one way, and the moon is bright in a different way, and the stars are bright in a different way. And even the various stars are different from each other in how bright they are.

⁴² And it is the same way with our bodies. The bodies that we will have when *God* causes us to live again after we die will not be the same as the bodies that we have now [MET]. The bodies that we have now will die and decay. The new bodies that we will have will never die. ⁴³ We despise the bodies that we have now, before we die. But our new bodies will be glorious. The bodies that we have before we die are weak. But our new bodies will be strong. ⁴⁴ The bodies that we have

before we die are natural bodies. But *our new bodies* will be ones that *God's Spirit* <controls/gives us>. Just like there are natural bodies, there are bodies that *God's Spirit completely* controls (OR, makes alive).

⁴⁵ *In the Scriptures* it is written {we read} that *when* the first man, Adam, *was created*, he became a living human being. *Christ later also became a human being*. But *he is different from Adam*, because *he* became a person who gives us *spiritual* life. ⁴⁶ But our bodies that *God's Spirit* <will completely control/will give us> are not the first bodies that we have. We have our natural bodies first. ⁴⁷ The first man, *Adam*, was created {*God* created the first man, Adam} from the dust of the earth. But *Christ*, the one who came later, came from heaven. ⁴⁸ Everyone on earth *has a body* like the first man on the earth had. And in heaven, *everyone will have a body like Christ*, the man who came from heaven, has. ⁴⁹ And just like *God* gave us bodies like the first man on earth had, so *we believers will have bodies* like *Christ* has, who is now in heaven.

⁵⁰ My fellow believers, I want you to know that *we(inc)* [SYN] cannot go *to heaven*, where *God* rules over everything, with our physical bodies, because our bodies *cannot last forever*. They will die and decay. ⁵¹ But I will tell you something that *God* has not revealed *before*: *Some of us believers* will not die [EUP]. However, **all** of us will be changed {*God* will change **all** of us}. ⁵² *It will happen* suddenly, as *fast as someone can* blink his eye [MET], when *we hear the sound of God's trumpet* for the last time. When we hear that trumpet, *all the believers* who have died will become alive and will have bodies that are changed {that *God* has changed}, bodies that will never decay. ⁵³ And the *bodies of us who are alive at that time* will also be changed {And *God* will also change the *bodies of us who are alive at that time*}. These bodies of ours that die and decay must be transformed into *new bodies* that will never die; *it will be like someone* [MET] getting rid of *his old clothes* and putting on *new ones*. ⁵⁴ When that happens, what is written {what <*a prophet/Isaiah*> wrote} *in the Scriptures* will <come true/happen>.

God will completely get rid of [MET] death.

Our dying will no longer have any power to defeat us;

⁵⁵ Death [APO] will not win a victory over us.

Death will not be able to hurt us.

⁵⁶ It is because we sin [MET] *that we die*, and *it is because we* have *God's laws* that *we know that we* have sinned. ⁵⁷ But because of what our Lord Jesus Christ *has done*, he enables us to be free *from having to obey God's laws to be saved and to be free of being afraid to die*. We should thank *God* for that!

⁵⁸ So, my fellow believers whom I love, continue to hold strongly to *the things that you believe*. Do not let anything cause you to doubt them. Always be doing enthusiastically the work that the Lord *gives you*. And remember that the work that you do for the Lord is never <in vain/useless>, *as it would be if God will not cause us to live again after we die*.

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

THEME: *You should set aside funds each week for the offering to be sent to believers in Jerusalem.*

16 ¹ Now *I will reply to another question that you asked*. You asked about the *money you are* collecting to *send* to *God's* people *in Jerusalem*. Do what I told the congregations in Galatia to do. ² Every Sunday each of you should set aside *at home* some funds [EUP] *for this purpose*, in proportion to how much *God* has prospered you. Then you should save it up, so that when I arrive there, you will not need to collect *any more money*. *Choose some men whom you approve of, to take* this money to Jerusalem. ³ Then, when I arrive, I will write letters stating that you have authorized these men to take the funds there. ⁴ And if *you* (OR, *I*) think that it is appropriate, I will go with them.

1 Corinthians 16:5-12

THEME: *I plan to spend some time with you. Treat Timothy respectfully when he arrives. Apollos plans to visit you later.*

⁵ Now I plan to travel through Macedonia *province*. I *plan to come* to see you, but I want to go through Macedonia first.

⁶ Perhaps I will stay with you for a short while, or I may stay with you for the whole winter, in order that you yourselves can provide some of the things *that I will need* [EUP] for my next trip. ⁷ I do not want to see you just for a short time and then continue my trip. I am hoping to stay with **you** for awhile, if the Lord *Jesus* allows me to do that. ⁸ But I will stay *here* in Ephesus *city* until *after* the Pentecost *festival*. ⁹ *I want to do that* because *God* has given me a great opportunity [MET] *to proclaim his good message here*. *As a result of my work here*, *he is producing* great results. I also want to stay here because there are many people here who oppose *my work*, and *I need to oppose them*.

¹⁰ When Timothy arrives *there in Corinth*, treat him respectfully [LIT], because he is working for the Lord just as I am. ¹¹ Do not let anyone despise him. And when he leaves there, give him some of the things that he needs *for his trip* [EUP] *here*, and also *ask God* to bless him. I am waiting for him to come, along with the other fellow believers *who have been traveling with him*.

¹² *You also asked* about our fellow believer, Apollos. I urged him strongly that he should go back to you with the three fellow believers *who came here from Corinth*. He was not at all willing to go *now*, but he will go later, when he has an opportunity.

1 Corinthians 16:13-24

THEME: I give you my final instructions, greetings from others, and my final blessings.

¹³ Be on guard *against anything that would hinder you spiritually*. You have believed *the true message*; continue believing it firmly. Be courageous. Keep strong *in your relationship with God*. ¹⁴ Act in a loving way in everything that you do.

¹⁵ You know that Stephanas and his family were the first ones *there in Achaia province to believe in Christ* [IDM]. They have devoted themselves to helping God's people. ¹⁶ My fellow believers, I urge you to submit yourselves to them and to people like them who do God's work and who work hard. ¹⁷ I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus arrived here *from Corinth*, because *they did things for me* that you were not able to do *because you were not with me*. ¹⁸ They comforted and encouraged me [SYN], and *I expect that this news from me* will do the same for you. You should honor *them*, and you should also honor others like them.

¹⁹ The congregations *here in Asia province* <send their greetings to/say that they are thinking fondly of> you. Aquila and *his wife Priscilla* and the congregation that meets in their house <send their warm greetings to/say that they are thinking fondly of> you because both they and you belong to the Lord. ²⁰ All your fellow believers *here* <send their greetings to/say that they are thinking of> you. Greet each other affectionately, as fellow believers *should*.

²¹ *Now I, Paul, having taken the pen from the hand of my secretary, write with my own hand <to say that I am thinking fondly of you/to give you my greetings>. I do this to show you that this letter really comes from me.*

²² <I pray that God will /May God> <curse/cause bad things to happen to> anyone who does not love the Lord Jesus. <I pray that our Lord will come soon/May our Lord come soon>!

²³ <I pray that our Lord Jesus will/May our Lord Jesus> continue to act toward you all <kindly/in ways that you do not deserve.>

²⁴ *I love all of you who have a close relationship with Christ Jesus.*

The Apostle Paul wrote several letters to the Christians at Corinth. We call this letter **2 Corinthians**

2 Corinthians 1:1-2

THEME: Paul and Timothy greet the Christians who are in Corinth.

1 ¹ I, Paul, who write this letter to you, became an apostle of Christ Jesus because God chose me for that. Timothy, our fellow believer, is with me. I am sending this letter to you who are God's people in the congregations in Corinth city. I want the believers who live in other places in Achaia province to also read this letter. ² We(exc) desire that you will experience God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ acting kindly toward you and causing you to have inner peace.

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

THEME: We thank God that he encourages us in all our troubles so that we are able to encourage you when you suffer. We suffered so much in Asia province that we were sure that we were going to die, but we learned to trust in God. He saved us from death and he will continue to save us.

³ We should praise God, who is the father of our(inc) Lord Jesus Christ. He always pities us and helps us because he is like [MET] a father to us and we are like his children. He always encourages us(inc). ⁴ He has encouraged us(exc) whenever we suffered hardships. As a result, we(exc) are able to encourage others whenever they suffer hardships, <just as/just like> God has encouraged us(exc). ⁵ It is true that just like Christ suffered, we who serve him also continually suffer because we belong to him. But also, because we belong to Christ, God greatly strengthens us <just as/just like> God strengthened him. ⁶ So, whenever we(exc) experience sufferings, we learn how to encourage you when you experience sufferings. As a result, you will become more and more the kind of people God wants you to be. Whenever God strengthens us(exc) in our sufferings, he does that in order that you may see how he makes us strong when we are suffering. Then, as God encourages you in that way, you will learn to continue patiently trusting him when you suffer as we do. ⁷ As a result, we(exc) strongly expect that because you suffer <just as/just like> we do, God will encourage you <just as/just like> he encourages us.

⁸ Our fellow believers, we(exc) want you to know [LIT] about the trouble that we suffered in Asia province. That trouble was so very great that it was much more than we were able to endure. As a result, we(exc) thought that we would certainly die. ⁹ Indeed, we felt like a person feels when he has heard a judge say, "I condemn you to die/be executed [MET]." But God allowed us to think that we were going to die so that we would not <rely on/trust in> our own strength. He wanted us instead to rely only on his strength, because he is the one who has power even to make those who have died live again. ¹⁰ And even though we(exc) were in terrible danger and were about to die, God rescued us. And he will continue to rescue us whenever we are in trouble. We confidently expect that he will continue to rescue us time after time. ¹¹ And we are also relying on you to help us by praying for us(exc). If many people pray for us, many people will also thank God when he kindly answers those many prayers and delivers us from danger.

2 Corinthians 1:12-2:11

THEME: You can trust what I tell you. I did not visit you, because I wanted to give you the opportunity to obey the instructions that I wrote to you. Now that you have punished enough the man who caused those problems, I urge you to forgive him and to encourage him.

¹² I am happy to say that I have behaved toward all people [MTY] in an honest and sincere way. I am sure within myself that this is true. Especially, I have behaved toward you honestly and sincerely because that is what God wants us to do. As I have done that, my thoughts have not been the thoughts that unbelieving people [MTY] think are wise. Instead, I have behaved toward people only as God wants me to, depending on God to help me in ways that I do not deserve. ¹³ I say that because in all my letters to you I have always written [LIT] clearly in a way that you can easily and completely understand when you read them. ¹⁴ Previously some of you, but not all of you, have completely understood that I am always honest and sincere with you. But I confidently expect that soon you will all be fully convinced about that. Then when the Lord Jesus [MTY] returns, you will all be able to say that you are pleased with me, just like I will be able to say that I am pleased with you.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ It was because I felt sure that all of you were pleased with me that I was planning to visit you on my way from here to Macedonia province. I also planned to visit you again on my way back from there, so that I could spend time with you twice, and be able to help you more, and I was hoping that you would give me things that I needed [EUP] for my journey to Judea province. ¹⁷ So then, even though I changed my mind later and did not do what I first planned to do, it was not because I did not have an important reason for changing my plans. <Surely you do not really think that I decide on what

I am going to do like people who do not know God do! Do you *really think* that I decide on what I am going to do like people who do not know God do? > [RHQ] I am *not like that*. I am not a *person who says to people*, “Yes, *certainly I will do that*,” and then *for no good reason changes his mind and says*, “No, *I will not do it*.”¹⁸ Just as surely as God always does what he says *he will do*, it is true that I have never said, “Yes, *I will do this*” when I *really meant* “No.”¹⁹ I follow the example of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. When I, along with Silas and Timothy, taught you *about Christ*, we told you that he was not *someone who said that he would do something and then did not do it*. Jesus Christ never said to anyone, “Yes, *I will do what you desire*,” and then did not do it.²⁰ We(*inc*) know that is true, because everything that God promised to do *for his people*, he has done completely by *sending Christ to save us*. That is why we say, “Yes, it is true! *God has done everything that he promised to do!*” And we praise him!²¹ Now it is only God himself who causes us(*exc*), as well as you, to keep on *believing strongly in Christ*. God is the one who chose us(*inc*) to belong to him and to have a close relationship with Christ.²² He also sent his Holy Spirit into our(*inc*) lives to mark us as belonging to himself [MET]. Also, since he has sent his Spirit to live inside of us(*inc*), he wants us to know by this that he guarantees [MET] to give us every other < blessing/good thing > that he has promised.

²³ So now I will tell you why I changed my mind and did not visit you as I intended to do: God himself knows that what I am telling you is true. The reason that I did not return to Corinth was so that I might not have to *speak to you severely about the wrong that you had done*.²⁴ It is not that Silas, Timothy and I want to boss you and tell you that you must believe only what we say. *Not at all!* On the contrary, we(*exc*) are working as partners *with you* in order to make you happy. We do not try to force you to believe everything that we believe, because we are sure that you are continuing to trust the Lord Jesus Christ and that you are remaining firmly committed to him.

2¹ Anyway, I definitely decided that I would not come to visit you again now. *If I had come, I would have spoken severely to you again, and I would have made you unhappy as I did the last time I visited you*.² And if I make you unhappy, I will have made unhappy the *only people who can cheer me up*, so <there will be none of you to cheer me up! who would cheer me up? > [RHQ]³ So, *instead of going to visit you at that time*, I wrote a letter and sent it to you. I wrote it the way I did so that you would know what you should do. Then when I come to visit you, you will not make me unhappy when you should be causing me to rejoice. I was quite sure that all of you would do what I told you to do in that letter, and because of that I would be happy and you would be happy, too.⁴ I wrote to you the way I did because I felt very troubled and distressed about you. I was even crying very much as I wrote. My purpose in writing was not in order to make you feel bad, but, instead, in order that you might know how deeply/much I love you.

⁵ Now I want to write about the man who caused all this anguish. What he did was very wrong, but I know that it has caused you much more sorrow than it has caused me, because what he did has affected all of you to some extent. I say, “to some extent,” because I do not want to say that he has done more harm than he really has done.⁶ Since he has now stopped sinning in that way, the punishment that nearly all of you decided was right for him has continued long enough.⁷ So now, instead of punishing him any longer, you need to forgive him and deal kindly with him. *If you do not forgive him*, he may become so sad that he will begin to think that you will never forgive him (OR, will stop believing in Christ).

⁸ For those reasons, I beg you to forgive him and accept him into your group again, and thus assure him that you truly love him.⁹ I feel sure that you will do as I ask, because when I wrote severely to you before, I did it to test you by seeing whether or not you really would do everything that I, as your apostle, asked you to do.¹⁰ So since you obeyed what I told you before, I feel sure that now you will obey what I am writing in this letter and forgive the man, as I have done, because I indeed have forgiven him for the wrong thing that he did. Anything he needed me to forgive him for, I have forgiven, and Christ knows that I have forgiven him sincerely. I have done that mainly to help you so that you and I will again have fellowship with each other, and that you will accept him into your group again.¹¹ I want you to forgive him so that Satan will not be able to take advantage of the problems among us and make the situation worse. We know very well [LIT] that he is always planning to cause problems among us.

2 Corinthians 2:12-17

THEME: I did not find Titus in Troas, so I went on to Macedonia province. Everywhere we go, God causes people to know Christ through our teaching. We do not teach in order to get money; we teach with sincere motives.

¹² I will continue by telling you what I did after I wrote to you from Ephesus city. I went to Troas city in order to tell people the message about Christ. When I arrived there, I found many people who had been prepared by the Lord Jesus [MET] to listen to what I told them about him.¹³ But because my fellow believer Titus had not arrived with a report from you, I still felt very anxious and concerned about you. So, after spending only a short time at Troas, I said ‘good-bye’ to the believers who were there and came here to Macedonia province to find Titus.¹⁴ However, before I tell you any more about that, I want to thank God for what he is doing. As a great leader of fighting men causes all his prisoners to take part in his victory parade [MET], God leads us who are his workers to always win out over Satan because of our(*exc*) close relationship with Christ. God causes people to come to know Jesus Christ as a result of our(*exc*) teaching his message. That message is like [MET] the smell of perfume.¹⁵ When we(*exc*) tell God’s message about Christ, it spreads out among people like the smell of perfume. Those who believe the message that we tell them are saved {Jesus Christ saves them} from the guilt of their sin. But those who reject that message will be separated from God forever.¹⁶ To those who are on the way to hell, our message is like [MET] a foul smell because it is about dying and being separated from God forever. But, to those on the way to heaven, the message that we teach is like a pure fragrant smell, because we tell them that they will live forever with God. As we think about that, we think <no one can have enough ability to do such important work for God! how can

anyone have enough ability to do such important work for God?> [RHQ] ¹⁷ But perhaps God considers us(exc) sufficient, because we do not work/act like so many others whom you know. **They** teach God's message in a way that they think people will like, and they think that people will pay them for teaching that way. **We(exc)** certainly do not do that. On the contrary, as servants of Christ, and knowing that God is watching us(exc), we teach sincerely the message that God sent us to proclaim.

2 Corinthians 3:1-6

THEME: *The way you now live proves that we teach the truth about Jesus Christ.*

3 ¹ As I write these things about myself, I am [RHQ] not doing it to boast about how good I am, as some of you say I do. Some people always carry letters with them that tell how well they work, that other people have written. But I do not [RHQ] need to bring letters like that when I come to you. Nor do I need to ask you to write letters like that for me when I go to other congregations. ² You yourselves are [MET] like a letter that recommends my work for God to everyone. People see how Christ changed your lives when you believed the message that I taught you. Everyone who knows you can see the result of my work for God. ³ You are [MET] like a letter that Christ himself has written that says good things about my work for God in your lives. You show people by the way you now conduct your lives that God has changed your lives as a result of my work among you. People did not find out about you by reading a letter that was written to them on paper with pen and ink. Instead, they saw how the Spirit of the all-powerful God has changed your lives. Nor did people find out about you by reading a letter that was carved on stone slabs like the stone slabs that God gave to Moses. Instead, it was the change that God's Spirit made in your lives [MET] that they saw.

⁴ I can very confidently write these things about the work that Silas, Timothy, and I did among you, because God knows that what I write is true. We(exc) are true workers for God because of what Christ has done for us. ⁵ We(exc), by ourselves, do not have the ability to do this work. None of us apostles can say, "I have changed the lives of these people." God is the one who has given us this ability. ⁶ He is the one who enables us(exc) to be his messengers. He has enabled us to tell people the message about the new agreement that he is making with them. This is not a message about obeying all the written laws of his old agreement that he made with the Jewish people. Instead, it is a message about God giving us his Spirit. Previously, God condemned people to be separated from him forever if they did not obey his laws. But by God's new agreement his Spirit enables people to live eternally.

2 Corinthians 3:7-11

THEME: *Our work of teaching people about God's New Agreement is much greater than the work of teaching people about his Old Agreement.*

⁷ Moses taught the people that if they did not obey God's laws completely they would be separated from God forever. God wrote his laws on stone slabs. Then he gave them to Moses to teach them to the people. Although God's laws condemned the people to die, when Moses brought those laws down from Sinai Mountain, God caused Moses' face to shine with radiance to show the people that these laws were God's laws. The radiance was so bright that the people of Israel could not keep looking at Moses' face. They had to look away. But although the radiance was bright, it was slowly fading away. ⁸ So, since God showed in such a wonderful way that those laws that condemned them to die were from him, surely when we(exc) teach people about how God's Spirit will change their lives, <God will show in an even more wonderful way that it is his message./will not God show in an even more wonderful way that it is his message?> [RHQ] ⁹ The message that Moses taught them was wonderful, but when people heard that message, they realized that they were sinners and that God would punish them. But God's message that we(exc) teach is a much more wonderful message. We teach people that God will <erase the record of/declare people no longer guilty for> the sinful things that they have done. ¹⁰ The truth is that, although the work of teaching the people to obey God's laws was once important, it is not as important now, because the work of teaching people that God will forgive them and enable them to live to please him is far more important. ¹¹ Furthermore, the message that Moses taught was not a lasting message, just like the brightness on his face was not lasting and soon faded away. But when God gives his Spirit to people, the wonderful work that God's Spirit does in their lives is much greater because it lasts forever.

2 Corinthians 3:12-18

THEME: *We teach a message that transforms peoples' lives. So we teach it with great confidence.*

¹² We(exc) know that the message that we teach is a much more wonderful message than the message that Moses taught. So we can preach boldly. ¹³ We do not need to put a veil over our faces when we teach people, as Moses did. Moses put a veil over his face so that the Israelites would not see that the radiance on his face soon faded away. Similarly, the glory of the old agreement has also faded away. ¹⁴ But the Israelites stubbornly refused to understand that the old agreement would end. Even now, when they read the old agreement, they still do not realize that it has ended. It is as if [MET] that same veil that Moses put on his face is now over their minds, keeping them from understanding God's true message. They will understand that message only when they come to trust in Christ. Then it will be as though God has removed the veil. ¹⁵ Throughout all these years, even until now, when the Israelites read what Moses wrote, it is as though a veil is covering their minds. ¹⁶ But when any of them believes in the Lord Jesus, God removes that veil from them. ¹⁷ It is by the power of his Spirit that the Lord works in our lives, and the Lord's Spirit has set us free from trying to obey the all the rules and rituals

that God gave Moses.¹⁸ *It is as though God has removed the veil from our faces [MET]. We realize how awesome Jesus is. As we realize that, we are continually being changed {the Holy Spirit is continually changing us} to become more and more like Jesus, so that people can see, more and more, how awesome Jesus is. It is the Spirit of the Lord who does this.*

2 Corinthians 4:1-6

THEME: *We are servants of Jesus. It is Jesus who has shown us how great God is.*

4¹ So, because God has acted so kindly toward me enabling me to teach this great message to people, I never get so discouraged that I stop teaching it.² And I have determined that we(exc) will be honest [LIT] in everything that we do. We will not do anything that would cause us to be ashamed if people found out about it. We never try to deceive you with clever arguments, as some other people do. We never try to deceive you by changing God's message, as those same people do. Instead, we always teach people only the truth about Christ, and we teach it clearly. Knowing that God is watching what we do, we teach his message in an honest way, with the result that no one can accuse us(exc) of being deceitful.³ And if, as some of you say, some people are not able to understand the message that we teach about Christ, it is not because we do not teach it clearly. It is because those people do not want to believe it. They are on the road to eternal death.⁴ Satan, who is the one who rules this world, controls the thoughts of those unbelievers. He prevents them from understanding the message about how wonderful Christ is. They are not able to understand that Jesus is like God in every way.⁵ That is why, when we(exc) teach people, we do not boast about ourselves, as some people say that we do. Instead, we teach you that Jesus Christ is our Lord. We ourselves are only your servants. We want to honor and obey Jesus.⁶ When God created the world, he commanded the light to shine where there was nothing but darkness. He is the one who has made his message about Jesus to be like [MET] a light shining into our(inc) minds. God has done that for all of us who believe in Jesus. He has done that so that we will understand that when people saw Christ, they saw how awesome God himself was.

2 Corinthians 4:7-15

THEME: *As Jesus' servants we suffer, but through our suffering many people will receive eternal life and thank and praise God.*

⁷ This work that God has given to us(exc) is [MET] like a very valuable treasure. But we who have that treasure are as weak as fragile [MET] clay pots. God has planned it like that in order that people will know that the power that changes lives is God's power, and not any power of our own.⁸ We are continually oppressed {People continually oppress us} in many ways, but we have not been prevented {God has not allowed them to prevent us} from teaching the message about Jesus Christ. We often do not know what to do in difficult situations, but we never say, "God has abandoned us."⁹ We are frequently persecuted {People frequently cause us to suffer}, but God never leaves us alone. Sometimes we are badly wounded {people badly wound us}, but God does not allow us to be killed {them to kill us}.¹⁰ Wherever we(exc) go, we continually realize that because people killed Jesus, people may kill us for teaching his message. But we are willing to go on living this way in order that people will know that Jesus is alive and that he is directing us [SYN].¹¹ So, although we are still alive, we always realize that we may be killed {that people some day may kill us} because we teach about Jesus. God allows us to suffer in order that people will see that Jesus is alive and that he is strengthening our bodies that are some day going to die.¹² So I conclude that although we apostles are constantly suffering and may soon die, the result of that is that all of you have now received eternal life.

¹³ We are not discouraged. We are like the person who wrote in the Scriptures, "God, I trusted in you and so I continue speaking your message." We(exc) also trust in God, so we continue speaking his message.¹⁴ We do this because we(exc) know that although people might kill us, God, who caused the Lord Jesus to live again after he died, will also cause us(exc) to live again after we die. God will do this because we belong to Jesus. And then God will bring us(exc), together with you, to be with him.¹⁵ So I say that all these things that we(exc) suffer are in order to help you. We have suffered all this in order that more and more people, as a result of hearing that God will kindly/freely forgive their sins, will thank him and praise him. Then they will greatly honor him and worship him.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

THEME: *As our bodies get weaker, God continually makes our inner lives stronger. He will reward us for all that we have suffered.*

¹⁶ So, because we know that as a result of our suffering many people will honor God, we(exc) never get so discouraged that we stop teaching his message. Although our bodies are getting weaker, God encourages us every day and strengthens us in our <inner beings/hearts>.¹⁷ I know that all these troubles that happen to us in this life are not significant and will not last forever. When we think of the glorious things that God is preparing for us to enjoy forever in heaven, all our suffering now is not important.¹⁸ That is why we say, "We will not continue thinking about all the suffering that we are experiencing now. Even though we cannot see all the things that God has prepared for us in heaven, those are what we should be thinking about." That is how we should think, because all these troubles that we(exc) have now will last only a short time. But what we will have in heaven, what we cannot see now, will last forever.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

THEME: *God will give all of us new heavenly bodies, and he will reward us according to what we did while we were living in our earthly bodies.*

5 ¹We know that *these bodies* we live in *here in this world* are like [MET] tents. *They are like temporary living/dwelling places. So we should not be concerned about what happens to our bodies.* We know that if we are killed {if someone kills us}, God will give us *permanent living places*. *Those permanent living places* [MET] will not be houses that people have made. *They will be new bodies in which we will live forever* in heaven. ²*While we are here on earth, we suffer.* We often groan because we desire *to go to heaven where God will give us our new bodies* [MET]. ³*When God gives us(inc) our new bodies* [MET], our *spirits will have* [LIT, MET] bodies to live in *that will last forever*.

⁴*It is true that* while we are still living in these bodies [MET] *that do not last forever*, we often groan [DOU] *because we desire to be free from them.* We are not longing to be without a body. Instead, *we groan because* we desire to receive our new bodies [MET] in heaven. We long for this to happen so that these bodies that are going to die some day will suddenly be changed *into bodies* that will live *forever*. ⁵It is God himself who has prepared us to *receive these new bodies*. He is also the one who has guaranteed/assured us(inc) that this will happen. He has guaranteed it by sending his Spirit *to live inside us now*.

⁶*So, because God's Spirit lives in us*, we are always confident *that God will give us new bodies*. We know that as long as we live in our bodies here on *earth*, we are not yet *living together* with the Lord *Jesus in heaven*. ⁷*While we(exc) live here*, we do not have our *new bodies*, *but we are trusting that God will give them to us*. ⁸*As I said, we(exc) are confident that he will give us new bodies*. We(exc) would much prefer to leave these bodies *in which we are now living*, and be with the Lord *Jesus in our home in heaven*. ⁹Because of all that, we always want to please *Jesus in everything that we do*. Whether we(exc) are *still living* here in these bodies or whether we have *left* them and are living in our home *in heaven*, we want to please him. ¹⁰*And we need to try hard to do that* because each one of us *believers* must stand before Christ *to be judged by him* {when he will judge his people}. *At that time he will reward each one of us* according to what we have done *while we lived in this world* in these bodies. *He will reward us according to* whether we have done good or whether we have done evil.

2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2

THEME: *Christ has shown me how much he loves people. That is why I teach his message with all the strength that I have. Therefore, I plead with you to believe that God will forgive you because of what Christ did for you.*

¹¹It makes me fearful *to think that some day I will stand before the Lord for him to judge me*. So I *do everything that I can* to convince people *that they should believe* (OR, *that I teach sincerely*) *God's message*. God knows very well *how I conduct my life and what I teach*, and I really believe that you also know it, within yourselves. ¹²Once again I *say, as I write this*, I am not just *trying* to make you think well/highly of me, *as some people will probably say that I am*. Instead, I am *telling you in this letter why you have good reason to tell those who criticize me* that you think highly of me. *I am telling you this* so that you will know what to say to those *teachers of false doctrine among you*. They are proud *of what they have done*, instead of *making sure that their hearts are right with God and being pleased with that*. ¹³*Some of them say that after God has enabled me to see visions, I talk like a crazy person*. If that is so, *I want you to realize that I talk that way in order to please God*. On the other hand, if you think that I *speak and act wisely, that is good*. I want you to know that I *do that in order to help you*. ¹⁴*I speak and act the way I do* because the love that Christ *has for people* influences me *in everything that I say and do*. When he died, *he suffered the punishment for the sins* of all people. So, we should all *think of ourselves as having died with him, being as unresponsive to sinful desires* as [MET] a corpse is. ¹⁵When *Christ died for the sake of all people*, he died in order that *we believers who are alive now* should not conduct our lives in a way that will just *please ourselves*. Instead, *we should conduct our lives in a way that will please him, because* he is the one who died for us and was raised {whom God raised} to life again.

¹⁶*So, because I realize how much Christ loves all people*, I no longer think about people in the way that those who do not believe *in Christ* think about *them*. Before I was a *believer*, I thought about Christ in the way that other non-believers did. But I do not think of him that way anymore. ¹⁷The fact is that God makes every one of us who *trusts* in Christ to be completely different *than we were before*. Our old way of *conducting our lives* is gone. We now have a *completely new way of conducting our lives*. ¹⁸This *complete change in our lives* is all something that God *does*. It is God who made it possible for us to have a peaceful relationship with him. *He was able to do that* because of what Christ *did for us*. Now God *has sent me*, and those who *work with me*, to tell *people that they can have a peaceful relationship with him*. ¹⁹That is, *he sent us(exc) to tell them that when Christ died, God was making it possible for all the people* of [MTY] the world to have a peaceful relationship with him. He no longer keeps a record of the sinful things that *we believers* have done. The message that God has given to us *to tell people is how we can have a peaceful relationship with him*. ²⁰So, it is I and my companions who are Christ's representatives *in this world*. *When we tell people the message about Christ*, it is God himself who is pleading with them by means of what we say. So, as true representatives of Christ, we plead with you: *Believe God's true message about Christ in order that you may be reconciled to* {have a peaceful relationship with} him. ²¹*You must believe that even though Jesus never sinned, God punished him for all the sinful things that people do, just as if Jesus had done those sinful things himself*. And because of our close relationship with Christ, God has *erased the record of our sins/declared us no longer guilty for our sins*.

6 ¹ Therefore, because I am working together with God *himself*, I say this to you very strongly: God has *already* kindly forgiven you because Christ died for you, so do not now say “It does not matter if I live just to please myself.” ² For God said long ago in the Scriptures:

When it is the right time *for me* to help you, *you will ask me to help you*, and I will hear you. Then I will *send* a Savior to help you.

So listen to what I am telling you: God has sent his Savior, so **now** is the time when God is ready to save people from the guilt of their sins.

2 Corinthians 6:3-10

THEME: *In spite of much suffering, we have lived as servants of God should live.*

³ Neither I nor the men *working* with me do anything that would hinder people from trusting in Christ, and so we cannot be accused {no one can accuse us} of *not serving God properly*. ⁴ Instead, in everything *that we(exc) say and do*, we show people that we serve God faithfully. We patiently endure *all the things that happen to us*. People cause us many troubles and, as a result, we are anxious *and often do not know what to do*. ⁵ Sometimes we have been beaten *and bound* {People have beaten us *and tied us*} with chains in prison. Angry mobs have attacked us, *wanting to kill us*. We have continued working for God until we had no more strength to work. We have had many sleepless nights, and we have *often been without food*. ⁶ *All that we think about and all that we do is pure in God's sight*. Knowing how God wants us to conduct our lives, we do what pleases him. We are patient with those who oppose us. We are kind to all people. We depend on the Holy Spirit to help us. We love people sincerely as God wants us to love them. ⁷ We faithfully teach the true message about Christ, and God gives us his power as we teach it. Like soldiers using weapons [MET] in a battle, we, by living righteously, defend God's message and refute those who attack it. ⁸ We serve God faithfully whether people praise us(exc) or whether they despise us, whether people say bad things about us(exc) or whether they say good things about us. We keep teaching the truth, even though some people say that we are deceiving people. ⁹ Some people know well that we are true servants of God, and yet others, who know us, refuse to believe that. People have often tried to kill us(inc), yet we are still alive. We have often been beaten, but we have not been killed {People have often beaten us(exc), but they have not killed us}. ¹⁰ Although we(exc) are often very sad because people have rejected our message, we are always happy because of all that God has done for us. Even though we(exc) are poor, we make it possible for many people to be spiritually rich. It is true that in this world we(exc) have nothing valuable [HYP], but because we belong to God's family, all that God has belongs to us.

2 Corinthians 6:11-13

THEME: *I ask you to accept us and love us as we love you.*

¹¹ You fellow believers in Corinth, I have been completely honest with you. I have told you exactly how we(exc) feel about you, that we love you very much [IDM]. ¹² We are not treating you as though we do not love you, but you are treating us as though you do not love us. ¹³ In return for our loving you, will you not love us [IDM] just as much as we love you? I am writing to you as if you were my own children.

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

THEME: *Do not get involved with people who do not honor God.*

¹⁴ Do not <team up/have a close relationship> with anyone who does not trust in Christ. I say this because we who trust in Christ and do what is right should not [RHQ] want to do things with wicked people. Or to say it in another way, just like light and darkness never join together, so those who belong to Christ and those who belong to Satan should never join together [RHQ]. ¹⁵ There is no [RHQ] agreement of any kind between Christ and Satan. So, believers have no [RHQ] common interests with unbelievers. ¹⁶ Just as no one would dare to bring idols into the Temple in Jerusalem, believers should never [RHQ] join with those who worship idols. I say that because [MET] the Holy Spirit lives in us, and so we are like the Temple of the all-powerful God. It is as God himself said in the Scriptures:

I will live in my people.

I will always be with/helping them.

They will say to me, “You are our God,” and

I will say to them, “You are my people.”

¹⁷ In another place in the Scriptures we read that the Lord said:

Get away from those who do evil;

keep yourselves separated from them.

Do nothing sinful that would make you unacceptable to me.

Then I will welcome you as members of my family.

¹⁸ The Lord also said:

I will care for you as [MET] a loving father cares for his children, and it will be as though you are my own sons and daughters.

I, the all powerful Lord, am saying this *to you*.

7 ¹ My friends, whom I love, because *God* has promised like this *to accept us(inc) as his children*, we(*inc*) must stop doing anything that is sinful. We must not do sinful things with our bodies, and we must not *think* sinful thoughts. *Because* we greatly revere *God*, we must strive to *live* a completely pure life. By doing that we will become the kind of people that he wants us to be.

2 Corinthians 7:2-4

THEME: *I love you all and I have great confidence in you.*

² So, as I just wrote, I want you to love me (OR, us [IDM] *who are true apostles of Christ*). I/we(*exc*) have never done anything wrong to any of you. I/we have not done anything to harm any one of you spiritually or financially. Nor have I/we tried to get money from *you* <for myself/for ourselves>. ³ *It is true that some people among you have said that I have done such things. Nevertheless*, I am not trying to make you all feel ashamed because, as I wrote before, I will continue to love you all very much [IDM], whether I live with you or die with you. I am very confident about you. ⁴ I am very pleased with you. You have greatly encouraged me, so that I am now very happy in spite of all the hardships that I have endured.

2 Corinthians 7:5-16

THEME: *Titus told me that my letter caused you to repent, and so now I am very happy.*

⁵ Now *I will write more about what I was saying about trying to find Titus*. When I left *Troas* and came here to *Macedonia province*, I still did not get rest for my body. Everywhere we(*exc*) went, *people were constantly* causing us trouble. *And not only were people constantly causing us* trouble, but I was greatly concerned *about you all*. ⁶ But *God*, who always encourages his people when they are discouraged, encouraged us by *sending Titus* back to us. ⁷ I was encouraged by *seeing Titus*, but when I heard how you had encouraged him, that encouraged me even more. He told me how much you wanted to see me. *He told me* that you were very sorry that you had made me so unhappy. *He also told me* that you are very eager for me to continue to serve as your apostle. When *Titus told me those things*, I was very, very happy.

⁸ Even though what I wrote in my letter <distressed you/made you sad>, I am not sorry that I wrote it. For a while I was sorry that I had written it, *because I knew that it would distress you*. Now *Titus has also told me* that it did distress you when you read it, but you were distressed only for a short time. ⁹ So now I am happy that I wrote it. I am not happy that you were distressed {that I distressed you}, but I am happy because, when you became distressed, you became sorry for what you had done and you asked *God* to forgive you. What I mean is that you became sorry in the way that *God* wanted you to be sorry, so my making you sorry did not harm you at all. ¹⁰ The fact is that when *God* causes us to be truly sorry for having sinned and we turn from our sinful behavior, then *God* saves us and will not punish us for the sinful things that we have done. And no one is ever sorry about that. However, the people who do not trust in *God* [MTY] may be sorry for the sinful things that they have done. But if they do not turn from their sinful behavior and ask *God* to forgive them, they will remain separated from him forever. ¹¹ But think about what happened when you read my letter. *God* caused you to be truly sorry for what you had done. You eagerly wanted to do what was right, and you wanted to show *God* (OR, me) that you had done the right thing. You were angry about what had happened, and you were worried that *God* would punish you if the situation continued. You also wanted me to visit you to encourage and help you. You wanted me to know that you really do accept me as your apostle, and that you punished the man who had sinned as I told you to do. By doing all of those things, you have shown me that you have done what is right in this matter. ¹² So, even though I wrote that severe letter to you, I did not write it just so that you would punish the man who had done what was wrong. Also, I did not write it for the benefit of the person whom he had wronged. Instead, I wrote it so that, when you read the letter, *God* would enable you to realize how much you really do respect my authority. ¹³ So, because you listened to me and did what I asked you to do, <I was/we(*exc*) were all> encouraged. Not only <was I/were we> encouraged, but <I was/we(*exc*) were> also very happy to see how happy *Titus* was when he arrived here. He told me/us that he did not need to worry any more, because he saw that you all had a good attitude toward me. ¹⁴ I had told *Titus* that I was pleased about you. And I did not need to be ashamed for having boasted about you like that, because you did what I knew that you would do. Just like everything that I have taught you and written to you has been the truth, just as the good things that I told *Titus* about you were also true. ¹⁵ Now he thinks back happily on how you all were willing to do what I asked you to do. He is also happy about the way you treated him with great respect. When he thinks about those things, it makes him love you even more than he did when he was with you. ¹⁶ As for me, I am very happy because now I am certain that I can depend on you to do what you know *God* wants you to do.

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

THEME: *The believers in Macedonia have already collected the money that they are going to send to the believers in Jerusalem. You should also finish collecting the money that you are preparing to send, and have it ready to send to Jerusalem soon.*

8 ¹ Now, my fellow believers, I want to tell you the results of *God's* acting kindly in the lives of the believers in the congregations here in *Macedonia province*. ² Even though the non-believers here have been severely causing the believers to suffer, the believers are always rejoicing very much. Although they are very poor, they gave very generously to help

other believers. ³ I know that this is true, because I have seen for myself that they not only gave money [EUP] that they were able to give, they gave so much money that they did not even keep enough to buy what they needed for themselves. Without anyone telling them to share their possessions, ⁴ they themselves kept requesting us to let them participate in what other believers are doing in sending a gift of money to [EUP] God's people in Judea province. ⁵ I thought that they would give only a little of their money, but they did much more than that! First, they told the Lord Jesus that they wanted to do what pleases him. After that, they told me that they wanted to do whatever I thought was good for them to do, because they were sure that would be what God wanted them to do. ⁶ So, because Titus was the one who helped you to begin gathering the money [EUP, MTY] for your gift, I urged him to also help you to finish collecting the rest of your generous and loving gift. ⁷ You are doing very well in so many other ways. God's Spirit enables you to believe that God will do miracles. His Spirit has given you the ability to tell God's message to others. His Spirit makes you able to know things that he reveals to you. You eagerly want to help people, and you love us(exc) very much. So now, try to do well in getting your generous gift of money [EUP] ready to send to the believers in Judea province.

⁸ I am not commanding you to do this. But because I have seen how believers in other places are eager to help other believers who do not have <what they need/enough to live on>, I want you similarly to show that you love others sincerely.

⁹ You already know how much our Lord Jesus did for you that you did not deserve. Everything in heaven belonged to him. But in order to benefit you, he left all of those things behind and became a human being. Here on earth he had very few possessions of his own. But because he became poor like that, he is able to cause you(pl) to become spiritually rich. ¹⁰ So, as you think of our Lord's example, I will tell you what I think that you should do in this matter of giving money. As you know, last year, because you desired to give money to help God's people in Judea province, you began collecting money [EUP]. ¹¹ So now you should finish collecting the money [EUP] that you began to gather. In that way, everyone will know that you are just as ready to finish collecting this gift as you were to begin collecting it. Give what you are able to give. ¹² Keep in mind that if you really want to give something to help others, whatever any one of you is able to give will be pleasing to God. God does not expect his people to give more than they can afford to give. ¹³ I do not mean that you should give so much to help others that you yourselves do not have what you need. No, what I want is that both you and others will have what you need. ¹⁴ Right now, when you have <more than you need/plenty> and the believers in Judea do not have <enough/all that they need>, with your gift you will enable them to have enough. Maybe some day when you do not have <enough/all that you need> and they have more than they need, they will be able to help you. Then everyone will have enough (OR, In that way each will share alike). ¹⁵ If that happens, the result will be like it is written {like someone/Moses wrote} in the Scriptures about the time when God provided manna for his people,

If someone gathered a lot of manna, he still did not have more than he needed, because he gave some to someone who did not have enough. And those who gathered only a little manna still had all that they needed, [LIT] because others who gathered more than they needed gave some manna to them.

2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5

THEME: I am sending Titus to you, along with two other believers, to help you get your gift ready. They are all well-respected and trustworthy men, so treat them well. It will be good if you have your gift ready to send to Judea province by the time I arrive in Corinth.

¹⁶ So now I am sending Titus to visit you again. God has caused him to be just as eager to help you prepare your gift as I am. I thank God for that. ¹⁷ He is going there, not only because we urged him to go, but because he himself is very eager to visit you again. ¹⁸ I am sending with Titus another believer whom you know well. All the groups of believers in this area think highly of him because he has faithfully taught the good message about Christ. ¹⁹ Not only that, but he was appointed by the congregations in this area {the congregations in this area appointed him} to go there with us(exc). He will go with us when we take the generous gift of money [EUP] to the believers in Jerusalem. We are taking this gift to honor the Lord Jesus and to show them that we all very much want to help them.

²⁰ The believers have given money [EUP] generously. So, by sending that fellow believer along with Titus to take the money to Jerusalem, we are trying to make sure that no one will be able to accuse us(exc) of taking some of the money for ourselves. ²¹ I say that because we(exc) want to make sure that the Lord God will see that what we(exc) do is right, and other people will see it, too. ²² Furthermore, there is also another believer here whom we are sending to you along with the two men whom I have just mentioned. Many times I have seen his good work for the Lord, and I know that he is eager to serve the Lord. Now, because he knows for sure that you want to give this gift the same as other believers do, he is even more eager than he was before to go with the two other men. ²³ As for Titus, I have chosen him because he is my partner, and he has worked faithfully with me to help you. As for the other two men, the congregations in this area are sending them as their messengers. These two men honor Christ by everything they do. ²⁴ So then, show them that you truly love others, and in that way help their congregations to understand why we(exc) are always saying such good things about you.

2 Corinthians 9:1-5

THEME: You and I will be ashamed if your gift is not ready when I arrive.

9 ¹ Now I want to write more about the gift of money [EUP] that you and other believers are preparing to send to the believers in Judea province. I do not really need to continue writing to you about it, ² because I already know that you really want to help them. In fact, I have been boasting about you, telling the believers here in Macedonia province that you people in Achaia province have been ready to help, beginning from last year. As a result, because you are very eager to

help *the believers in Judea province*, you have made most of *the believers here in Macedonia province* also want to give a gift. ³ However, I am sending these *three* believers in order that *they will be able to help you finish collecting the money*. Then when I and others arrive later, the people with me will see for themselves that the things that I have been boasting about you are true [LIT]. I want you to have your gift ready for us(exc) to take to Jerusalem, just like I have been telling them that you were ready. ⁴ When I come, if any of *the believers from Macedonia* come with me, I do not want them to find that your gift is [MTY, EUP] not ready. If that were to happen, I would be very ashamed, and you yourselves would be even more ashamed. ⁵ So that is why I felt that it was necessary to urge these *three* believers to go and visit you before I come. In that way, they would be able to help you to finish collecting the generous gift [EUP] that had been promised by you {you had said you would give}. If you do that, not only will the gift be ready by the time that we arrive, but everyone will see that you have given because you really want to give, and not because anyone has forced you to give.

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

THEME: *If you give generously and willingly, God will always continue to bless you so that you will have enough to continue giving generously, and your generosity will cause many other people to praise and honor God.*

⁶ Do not forget this: “A farmer who sows only a few seeds will not gather/reap a large harvest, but the one who sows a lot of seeds will gather/reap a large harvest [MET].” Similarly, if you give just a little to help others, God will give you only a few blessings. But if you give willingly and cheerfully to help people, you will receive in return many blessings from God. ⁷ Each of you should decide within yourself how much you(sg) should give, and then give that amount. You(sg) should not be thinking to yourself, “I really do not want to give this money.” And you(sg) should not give just because someone tells you to give. Instead, you should give willingly and cheerfully, because God loves those who give cheerfully. ⁸ Moreover, God can enable you to give to others cheerfully. If you give that way, God will in return give you many good blessings. He will do that so that at all times you will always have all that you need. Indeed, you will have even more than you need. As a result, you will be able to do many more good things to help others. ⁹ Those who give willingly and cheerfully will be rewarded like the man about whom it is written {about whom <someone/the Psalmist> wrote} in the Scriptures,

He generously helps others,

he gives to those who are poor.

God will remember the good things that he did,
and reward him with good things forever.

¹⁰ God always gives seeds to farmers to plant, and also gives them food to eat. So, similarly, God will always make it possible for you to have enough money [MET], so that you will be able more and more to generously help those who are needy. ¹¹ God will give you many blessings in many different ways as a result of your generously helping others. Furthermore, the generous gift that you are getting ready for us(exc) to take to the believers in Judea province will cause many people to thank God.

¹² Also remember that when you give money to [EUP] help God's people, you not only give them what they need, but also, because of that, many people will thank God very much for you and for what you have done. ¹³ As a result of your giving money to help others, they will praise God, not only because you have believed the good message about Christ, but also because you have generously given some of your possessions so that they and other believers will all have <enough/their needs supplied>. ¹⁴ Also, when they pray for you, asking God to bless you, they will remember how grateful they are [IDM] that God caused you to give very willingly and cheerfully. ¹⁵ Finally, we should all thank God because he gave us the greatest gift of all when he sent his Son to save/rescue us(inc) <from the guilt of our sin/from being punished for our sin>. That is a gift too wonderful for anyone to be able to tell about completely!

2 Corinthians 10:1-6

THEME: *I Paul say to you, “Do not listen to those who say that I am afraid to rebuke you when I am with you and that I behave like people do who are not believers.”*

10 ¹ Now I myself, Paul, appeal to you in a gentle and humble way, like Christ would. Certain people among you have falsely accused me by saying, “When Paul is with you, he is humble and speaks gently to you, but when he is away from you, in the letters he writes to you he threatens to punish you.” Those people claim that I do not have authority over you as an apostle. ² I strongly plead with you, “Please do not listen to people who say things like that!” I strongly plead with you to not listen to them, so that when I am there with you I will not need to speak severely to you in the same severe way as I plan to speak to those people who think that I behave like people who are not believers. ³ Remember that although I am human like everyone else in the world, I do not fight against those who oppose me in the way that people who are not believers fight those who oppose them. ⁴ I will tell you what I mean by that: Just like soldiers use various weapons to fight their enemies [MET], I <fight against/oppose> those who oppose God's message, but I do it in a different way. I do not use human arguments and clever/sweet talk, like unbelievers do. Instead, I fight against my opponents by the powerful means that God has given me. With that power I destroy their arguments against God's message and against me, just like soldiers destroy [MET] the fortresses of their enemies. ⁵ Specifically, I show that the human arguments that they use to deceive people are completely wrong. When they proudly say things that keep other people from knowing God, I show them that they are completely wrong. I also enable people to change their ways of thinking so that they think about everything as Christ wants them to think. ⁶ I am also ready to discipline everyone among you who has not obeyed the things that Christ taught. I will do this as soon as you who truly want to obey Christ show me that you are going to obey him completely.

2 Corinthians 10:7-11:6

THEME: *Those who teach what is false must come to realize that I also belong to Christ and that God has given me authority over you. I worry that they will deceive you and that you will stop being faithful to Christ alone.*

⁷ I want you to understand what is happening among you. There are certain people there who are telling you that they know for sure that they are Christ's representatives and that I am not. Those people should realize that I represent Christ as much as they do. ⁸ I say that because the authority that the Lord gave me as his apostle is to help you to become mature believers, not to cause you to stop trusting in Christ. So even if I were to boast a little more than I have already done (OR, proudly talk a little more than I have already talked about the authority the Lord gave me as his apostle), no one would be able to make me ashamed by proving that Jesus has not given me that authority. ⁹ I do not intend to make you afraid of me by the letters that I write to you. ¹⁰ I say that because some people are saying, "When Paul writes letters, he says severe things in order to make you obey him, but when he is here with you, people look at him and say he is weak, and he certainly is not a skillful speaker." ¹¹ The people who say such things should think carefully about this: The kind of severe person that you think me to be when you read my letters is exactly the kind of person I will be when I come. I will do what I wrote that I would do.

¹² Those who oppose me tell others how good they are. If they really were superior to me [IRO], I would not be so bold as to say that I was equal to them, or to compare myself with them. But they are not superior to me. They make up their own standards about what God's servants should be like, and then they look at their own conduct and decide whether or not they meet those standards. By doing that, they show that they are foolish. ¹³ But as for me, I will not boast about working among people living in areas outside of the areas that God sent/assigned me to work in. But it is right for me to say that I have worked in the areas that God assigned to me. And since those areas include the one where you live, ¹⁴ when I talk about working among you, I am not boasting about working in an area where God did not give me the right to work. What those who oppose me say about my not having authority as an apostle to you might be true if I had not already come all the way to your area. But that is not true, because I was the one who first brought the message about Christ to you. I came to Corinth before they did!

¹⁵ Also, my opponents boast about work that others have done as if it were their own work. It is improper for them to do that, but I do not do as they do. I confidently expect that as you trust more and more in the good message that I preach, you will more and more agree that God has given me the right to work as Christ's representative among you. ¹⁶ Then I will be able to go to places beyond where you are. I will be able to tell the good message about Christ to people in areas where no one has yet gone to tell that message. And I will be able to talk about the work I myself have done in that area, instead of boasting about work that someone else has already done as if it were my work. ¹⁷ I try to do according to what someone/Jeremiah wrote in the Scriptures,

If anyone wants to boast about something, he should boast only about what the Lord God has done.

¹⁸ You can realize, then, that it is not those who <praise themselves/tell you what great things they have done>, as my opponents do, whom you should accept as apostles. Instead, you should accept as true apostles only those whom the Lord commends.

11 ¹ But now, because my opponents are saying that Christ sent them to you as his representatives and that he did not send me, please be patient with me, too, while I say a few things that may sound as if [IRO] I am praising myself, like a foolish person would do. You have been <putting up with/tolerating> those who teach what is false; now then, <put up with/tolerate> me too. ² I really do care about what happens to you, just as God cares about what happens to you. Just like a father wants his daughter to be sexually pure when he presents her to the man she will marry [MET], I want you to belong to Christ alone and to no other. I want to present you to him as people who remain faithful to him only, and who have not believed the deceitful message of those who are teaching what is false. ³ However, just like Satan, when he cunningly appeared as a snake, deceived Eve's thinking and caused her to disobey the Lord God, I am concerned that those teachers will cause you to think wrongly so that you will no longer be faithful to Christ alone. ⁴ I say that because some people have come among you who are teaching their own thoughts about Jesus. They are saying about him things that are entirely different from what I taught you. They are urging you to receive a powerful spirit who would come to live inside of you, but it is not the same Spirit that you received from God when you believed in Christ. They preach what they call a good message, and you accept their message, even though it is not the same as the good message about Christ that you heard from me. And you have gladly accepted them and their message! ⁵ I consider that [LIT] none of those men, even though they think of themselves as being [IRO] extra-special apostles, are in any way greater than I am. ⁶ I admit that I am not an eloquent speaker, but I do know God's message. I have made that clear to you by everything that I have done among you and by all that I have taught you.

2 Corinthians 11:7-15

THEME: *You are mistaken if you think that I do not love you because I refused to accept money from you for my teaching. I will go on doing that to prevent those false apostles among you from boasting that they work just as I do.*

⁷ I refused to accept money from you as pay for teaching you God's message about Christ. <It is ridiculous for you to think that what I did was wrong!/Was that wrong?> [RHQ] I know that by teaching you without pay, I made myself seem [IRO] unimportant to you. But I did it to honor you. ⁸ Some people might say that it was as though [IRO] I was robbing other congregations because I accepted money from them in order that I might work among you. ⁹ Furthermore, when I was

there with you and had no money to buy the things that I needed, I did not cause any difficulty to any of you <by depending on you/by asking you for money/support> because our(inc) fellow believers who came from here in Macedonia province brought enough money for me to buy everything that I needed. So I have not caused you any difficulty at all by asking you for money, and I never will ask you for money [EUP]. ¹⁰ And as sure as you know that everything that Christ says is true, you can be sure that what I say to you now is true. Wherever I go there in Achaia province, I do not let you believers pay me for doing God's work among you. And no one will be able to prevent me from boasting about that. ¹¹ No one should wrongly [RHQ] think that it is because I do not love you that I do not take pay from you. God knows that you truly/really are very dear to me.

¹² There are some men there among you who would like to be able to say boastfully that they work among you just as I do. So, in order to make it impossible [IDM] for them to say that, I have refused to accept pay from you, and I will continue doing that. ¹³ Those men are lying when they say that they are apostles. They work deceitfully. Even though they say that they work for God, they are working only for themselves. They try to make people think that Christ sent them as his apostles, but they do not truly represent him. ¹⁴ I am not surprised that they act like that, because Satan himself causes people to think that he has come as a shining messenger from God. ¹⁵ So it should not surprise you if these men, who really serve Satan, do good deeds in order to make you think they serve God. Some day God will punish them according to what they deserve because of their evil deeds.

2 Corinthians 11:16-12:10

THEME: You seem to listen to those who boast, so I too will boast. I will boast about being a Jew (as those others do), and I will boast about having suffered greatly for Christ, and about an extraordinary vision that God gave me. Although God then caused me to suffer an affliction, he promised that he would help me and strengthen me.

¹⁶ I say again: I do not want anyone among you to think that my boasting about myself is like foolish people boast. But even if anyone thinks that I am boasting about myself like a foolish person boasts, listen to what I have to say anyway, just like you listen to those false apostles. They really speak foolishly! Listen to me while I also boast a little. ¹⁷ About the things that I am going to tell you, boasting confidently about myself, surely you know that they are not the kind of things that the Lord Jesus would say. Instead, I will speak as a foolish person would speak. ¹⁸ Because many among you are boasting about their own work, as unbelievers do, I will also boast about myself and my work [MTY, IRO]. ¹⁹ I am sure that you, who think that you are so wise, will accept what I say because you gladly accept the false teachers and the foolish things that they say. ²⁰ When people treat you as if they were your bosses, you gladly submit to them. You think that it is all right when others force you to provide for their needs. You think that it is all right when people take control over you, when they boast about themselves, or when they insult you by slapping you in the face. ²¹ I agree that I was not bold enough to treat you in such ways. So do you think that [IRO] I should feel ashamed because I did not do that?

So now, talking like a person who does not have any sense, I will boldly tell you some things about myself, just like those false apostles tell you things about themselves. ²² Do they tell you that they are Hebrews and can speak in the Hebrew language? Well, I can say the same thing about myself. Do they tell you that they belong to God's people, the nation of Israel? Well, I can say the same thing about myself. Do they tell you that they are descendants of our great ancestor Abraham? Well, he is my ancestor, too. ²³ Do they tell you how much work they have done for Christ? Now I am talking like a crazy person talks [EUP]. Well, I work for Christ much more than they do. I have been in prison many more times than they have. Many times I have been beaten {people have beaten me} very severely because I believe in and obey Christ. Many times I almost died because of serving Christ. ²⁴ On five occasions Jewish religious leaders beat me 39 times with a whip. ²⁵ On three occasions I was beaten {Roman officials beat me} with wooden sticks. On one occasion a large crowd of people threw stones at me to kill me. On three occasions the ship that I was traveling in was wrecked and sank. On one of those occasions I was floating in the water a night and a day before I was rescued. ²⁶ As I have often traveled to other places, I have often risked losing my life. For example, sometimes I have been in danger crossing rivers. I have been in danger traveling in places where there were bandits. At times I have been in danger among people of my own nation, the Jews, and at other times I been in danger among those who are not Jews. I have been in danger in cities, and I have been in dangerous situations in barren areas. I have been in dangerous situations when I was traveling in ships. I have been in danger among people who falsely claim to be fellow believers. ²⁷ I have worked very hard [DOU] to earn <a living/what I need>, and often I did not sleep. At times I was hungry and thirsty, and at times I did not have enough time to eat. Sometimes I was cold because I did not have enough clothes to wear. ²⁸ In addition to all that, I am constantly and deeply concerned about all the congregations that I have helped to begin. ²⁹ Every time that I hear about fellow believers [RHQ] who are not strong spiritually, I sympathize with them and try to help them. Every time that I learn about a fellow believer [RHQ] who causes another believer to do something wrong, that makes me very angry.

³⁰ Because it seems that it is necessary for me to continue boasting about myself, I will boast about things that caused some people to think of me as being weak. ³¹ God, who is the Father of our(inc) Lord Jesus, and who is the one whom we should praise forever, knows that I am not lying about this. ³² One time when I was in Damascus city, the governor whom King Aretas had appointed to rule part of his area told his soldiers to guard the gates of the city so that they could seize me if I tried to leave the city. ³³ But my friends enabled me to escape by putting me in a large basket and lowering me to the ground by a rope through an opening in the city wall. That was really humiliating!

12 ¹ It seems that it is necessary for me to go on boasting about myself. Although I do not think that my telling you about this will help you to accept me as Christ's representative to you, I will say this anyway. I will tell you about visions that the

Lord gave a certain man and about things that he supernaturally revealed to that man. I will tell you this because some of the people among you boast that it was in visions that they received the things that they teach.² The man that I will tell you about is one who believes in Christ. Fourteen years ago he was taken {Christ took him} up into the highest heaven, the place where God is. I do not know whether he went there in his physical body or whether he was outside of his body at that time and only his spirit went. Only God really knows.³⁻⁴ But he was suddenly taken {Christ suddenly took him} up to a place called Paradise, that wonderful place where God lives. I repeat that I do not know whether his body went there or only his spirit. Only God knows that. While he was there, God told him some things that he does not allow human beings to tell others about.⁵ I will proudly talk about that man. However, I will not be boasting as I say that I am the one who saw and heard those wonderful things. I will talk only about the things that cause others to think of me as a weak human being like everyone else.⁶ But even if I should choose to boast to you about such wonderful things that happened to me, I would not be speaking like a fool, because I would be telling you the truth. But I will not talk proudly about such things, because I do not want any of you to think highly of me because of the things that have happened to me. Instead, I want you to decide what kind of person I am by the way you see me acting and by what you hear me teach.⁷ In order that I might not become proud because of those many wonderful things that Christ revealed to me, God permitted Satan to send a messenger to humble me (OR, to make me sick). What he did to me was painful, like [MET] a thorn pricking my body.⁸ Three times I prayed to the Lord about it, begging him to take this away from me.⁹ But he said to me, "No, I will not take this away from you. Instead, I will kindly help you, and that will be all that you need, because it is when you are weak that I can best work powerfully to help you." So, because of what the Lord said to me, I will very gladly boast about the things that make me seem weak, so that people may realize that it is Christ who gives me power to serve him.¹⁰ For that reason, whenever I am weak, or when people insult me, or when I have to endure hardships, or when I am persecuted {people cause me to suffer} or when I am in situations that distress me, I am content because I am serving Christ. I can say that because at any time when I myself am weak, that is the very time when Christ powerfully helps me.

2 Corinthians 12:11-18

THEME: *When I was with you, I did things that showed you that I am truly Christ's representative. But I still will not take pay from you when I come to visit you again. And those people are wrong who say that I tricked you by sending Titus to get money for myself from you.*

¹¹ It has been foolish for me to talk about myself like this, but it is you who forced me to do it. Truly if the Lord would not help me, I would be worthless, as my opponents say that I am. But none of the men whom you wrongfully think [IRO] are great apostles are greater in any way than I am. So it would have been right/proper for you to say good things about me.

¹² You should have done that, because when I was with you I repeatedly did the things that showed you that I am truly an apostle, such as performing many [DOU] miracles.¹³ And I have certainly treated you as well as I treated the other congregations that I helped to start. Or do you think that by not asking you to pay me for my work, I was not treating you as well as I treated the other congregations? <It is foolish for you to think that [IRO] it was wrong for me not to ask for pay from you for my work, and therefore I should ask you to forgive me for that!/Do you think that it was wrong for me not to ask for pay from you for my work, and therefore I should ask you to forgive me for that?> [RHQ]

¹⁴ Now listen to me! It is time for me to come to you for a third visit. When I come, I still will not insist that you pay me for my work, because I do not want any of your money [EUP]! What I want is for you [MTY] to love and appreciate me. It is not normally the duty of children to save money to provide for the needs of their parents. Instead, it is the duty of parents to provide for their children [MET]. In the same way, it is not your duty to provide for me. Instead, it is my duty to provide spiritual help for you because you are my spiritual children.¹⁵ So, on my part, as a good parent would do, I will be very happy to use everything that I have, and do everything that I possibly can, in order to help you. And because I love you very much, <I will be very disappointed if you do not love me a little bit, too./will you not love me a little bit, too?> [RHQ]

¹⁶ You all know that I did not depend on you to provide for my needs. However, there are some who accuse me, saying that [IRO] I was very clever and got money from you by tricking you.¹⁷ But did I ever do that? No! I never [RHQ] asked any of the men whom I sent to you to get money from you and bring it to me!¹⁸ Titus went and visited you because I urged him to do so. I also sent the other believer, whom you know, to go with Titus. You know that Titus did not [RHQ] trick you in order to get money from you. And you certainly know that he and I have always [RHQ] acted in exactly the same honest way towards you.

2 Corinthians 12:19-13:10

THEME: *I am worried that when I visit you I will find that many of you are still sinning. I pray that God will help you turn from your sinful behavior, so that I will not have to discipline you when I come.*

¹⁹ While you have been reading this letter, if you have been thinking that I have just been saying these things to defend myself against those who accuse me, you are wrong. I have been saying these things honestly, knowing that God is listening to me. I also speak as one who has a close relationship with Christ. Everything that I do and everything that I say is to help you whom I love <to grow spiritually/to become spiritually mature>.²⁰ I have written this way to you because I worry that when I come to visit you, I will see that some of you are not conducting your lives the way that I want you to. If that is so, when I get there you will see that I will have to act in a very severe way toward you, and I am sure that you do not want that. Specifically, I am afraid that some of you may be quarreling, or that you are being jealous of each other, or that you quickly show others that you are very angry with them, or that you are acting selfishly, or that some of you are saying bad things about others, or that you are <spreading false rumors/saying false things> about each other, or that you

are acting proudly, or that you are *doing things* in a disorderly manner. ²¹ I *feel anxious/am concerned* about you. I worry that when I visit you again, God, the one whom I serve, will make me feel ashamed of you when I see that you still are not conducting your lives as believers should. Then I will feel very sad about some of you who were sinning previously and have not turned from your sinful behavior. Some of you may still have impure thoughts. Some of you may be having sexual intercourse with those to whom you are not married. And some of you may be doing other shameful things.

13 ¹ In the Scriptures it is stated that when one person accuses another of wrongdoing, you must not believe his accusation right away. First, you must listen to at least two or three people who actually saw what happened. So keep in mind that this will be the third time that I will visit you! ² When I visited you the second time, I warned you that I was going to punish all the wrongdoers among you. And now I am warning you again while I am still away from you. When I visit you this third time, I will punish those who were sinning at the time when I visited you before and who are still sinning, and I will punish the others who have been sinning since then, if they have not turned away from their sinful behavior. ³ Because you have demanded that I prove to you that Christ is speaking to you when I speak to you, I will show you that I speak to you as his apostle. Christ does not approve of your sinful behavior. On the contrary, he will powerfully discipline you. ⁴ It is true that Christ seemed to be weak when he was crucified {when people killed him by nailing him to the cross}. But it is also true that he now lives because God worked powerfully to make him alive again. Similarly, as I serve God, I am a weak human being as Christ was. But I have a close relationship with Christ who is now alive again. And with his authority I will use God's power to discipline you.

⁵ Each of you should ask yourself: "Do I believe God's message about Christ?" Each of you should test yourselves to make sure that you truly do believe in Christ and thus truly belong to him, and that his Spirit lives within you(pl). When you test yourselves in that way, I am sure that you will [RHQ] say to me, "Yes, of course we belong to Christ." ⁶ I am also certain that you will know that I belong to Christ, just like you do. ⁷ But because I do not want to have to punish you, I am praying to God that he will help you not to do anything evil that would cause me to have to punish you. I pray this, not in order that when people who say that I am not your apostle realize that my ministry among you has been very successful, they will have to agree that I do have authority from Christ. Instead, I pray this because I want you to do what is right, even though that might mean that my opponents would think that I do not have authority from Christ, since I would not have an opportunity to show my authority to discipline you. ⁸ If you do what is right, I will not discipline you, because it would not be right for me to do that if you are conducting your lives the way you should, like God's true message says that you should. What God asks me to do is to help people to know and obey his true message. ⁹ I am happy whenever you are strongly trusting and obeying Christ, and because of that I do not have to use my authority to discipline you. It does not matter to me if that makes people think that I do not have any authority. Truly, what I am praying for is that God will help you to completely change your conduct. ¹⁰ That is why I am writing these things while I am still away from you. What I want is that when I visit you, you will already be conducting your lives as God wants you to, and so I will not have to discipline you severely, as the Lord Jesus Christ gave me the authority to do. The authority that I have from the Lord is to help you to become spiritually mature believers, not to cause you to stop trusting in him.

2 Corinthians 13:11-14

THEME: I finish my letter with some advice. All of us here send you our greetings, and I pray that God will bless you.

¹¹ Finally, my fellow believers, I say to you, rejoice. Completely change how you conduct your lives, and do what I have urged you to do. Be united in what you think about the matters about which I have written to you. Live peacefully with each other. If you do those things, God, who enables you to love each other and be peaceful, will bless [MTY] you. ¹² Greet each other affectionately as fellow members of God's family should. All God's people here send you greetings. ¹³ I pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will act kindly toward all of you, in ways that you do not deserve, that God will show all of you how much he loves you, and that the Holy Spirit will cause you to have good fellowship with him and with each other.

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in Galatia province. We call this letter **Galatians**

Galatians 1:1-5

THEME: I, Paul, as God's chosen apostle, am sending this letter to the churches in Galatia and asking God's blessings on you.

1 ¹ I, Paul, write this letter to you. I remind you that I am an apostle. That is not because a group of people appointed me, nor because a human being sent me to be an apostle. Instead, Jesus Christ and God our heavenly Father, who caused Jesus to become alive again after he died, have appointed and sent me to be an apostle. ² All the fellow believers who are here with me approve of this message that I am writing. I am sending this letter to the congregations that are in Galatia province. ³ I pray that God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ will kindly help you and enable you to have inner peace. ⁴ Christ offered himself as a sacrifice in order that he might remove the guilt for our sins. He did that in order that he might enable us to quit doing the evil things that people who do not know him do. He did this because God, who is our Father, wanted it. ⁵ I pray that people will praise God forever. <May it be so!/Amen!>

Galatians 1:6-10

THEME: I am disappointed that you are believing a message that is not the good news about Christ, and I ask God to eternally punish those who are teaching such a message.

⁶ I am very disappointed [IRO] that so soon after you trusted in Christ you have turned away from God. He chose you in order that you might have what Christ freely/kindly gives. I am also disappointed that so soon you are believing a different message which some say is "good news." ⁷ Their message is not a true message. What is happening is that certain persons are confusing your minds. They are desiring to change the good message <that Christ revealed/about Christ> and are creating another message. ⁸ But even if we(exc) apostles or an angel from heaven would tell you a message that is different from the good message that we told you before, I appeal to God that he punish such a person forever. ⁹ As I told you previously, so now I tell you this once more: Someone is telling you what he says is a good message, but it is a message that is different from the good message that I gave you. So I appeal to God that he severely punish that person. ¹⁰ I said that because [RHQ] I do not desire that people approve me, contrary to what some have said about me. It is God whom I desire to approve me. Specifically, I do not say and do [RHQ] things just to please people. If it were still people whom I was trying to please, then I would not be one who willingly and completely serves Christ.

Galatians 1:11-12

THEME: It was Jesus Christ, not any human, who revealed the message that I proclaim.

¹¹ My fellow believers, I want you to know that the message about Christ that I proclaim to people is not one that some person created/thought up. ¹² I did not receive this message from a human messenger, and no human being taught it to me. Instead, Jesus Christ revealed it to me.

Galatians 1:13-24

THEME: For seventeen years after God showed his Son to me, I had no contact with the apostles.

¹³ People have told you how I behaved formerly when I practiced the Jewish religion. They told you that I continually did very harmful things to the groups of believers that God established, and they told you that I tried to get rid of those people. ¹⁴ I practiced the Jewish religion more thoroughly than many other Jews who were my age practiced it. I much more enthusiastically tried to get others to obey the traditions that my ancestors kept. ¹⁵ Nevertheless, before I was born God <set me apart/selected me>. He chose me to live eternally, something that I did not deserve. ¹⁶ He wanted me to know that Jesus is his Son, so that I would tell others the message about his Son in regions where non-Jews live. But I did not immediately go to any human beings [SYN] in order to gain an understanding of that message. I received it directly from Christ! ¹⁷ I did not immediately leave Damascus and go to Jerusalem for that purpose to those who were apostles before I was. Instead, I went away to Arabia region, a desert area. Later I returned once more to Damascus city. ¹⁸ Then three years after God revealed this good message to me, I went up to Jerusalem in order that I might meet Peter. But I stayed with him for only fifteen days, which was not long enough for him to teach me thoroughly about Christ. ¹⁹ I also saw James, the brother of our Lord Jesus and the leader of the believers there, but I did not see any other apostle. ²⁰ God knows that what I am writing to you is completely true [LIT]! ²¹ After I left Jerusalem, I went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. ²² At that time people in the Christian congregations that are in Judea province still had not met me [SYN] personally. ²³ They only heard others say about me repeatedly, "Paul, the one who was formerly doing harmful things to us, is now telling the same

message which we believe and which formerly he was trying <to destroy/to cause people to stop believing>!"²⁴ And they praised God because of *what had happened* to me.

Galatians 2:1-10

THEME: *Finally, when I returned to Jerusalem and told Peter, James, and John what I always proclaim, they agreed that Barnabas and I were preaching the same message and serving the Lord just like they were.*

2¹ After fourteen years passed, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas. I took Titus also.² But *I tell you that* I went up there because of what God revealed to me. *It was not because someone asked me to come.* I told people what was that good message that I was preaching in regions where non-Jews live. But I talked privately to those whom your new teachers highly respect. I did that in order that what I was doing and what I had done [MET] might not become useless [MET] *as a result of people rejecting my message because they thought that I was teaching something that was not true.*³ But *even though the leaders of the believers usually insisted that when non-Jews trusted in Christ someone must circumcise them,* they did not even insist that Titus be circumcised, even though he was a Greek man who was with me.⁴ *I talked to them privately* because some people *successfully* pretended that they were fellow believers and associated with the true believers. They did that in order that they might observe closely what we do because we are free *from having to obey all the Jewish laws and rituals* because of our close relationship with Christ Jesus [MET]. Those people wanted to make us *like slaves* [MET] *of those rituals by convincing us that we cannot trust Christ solely but that we must also obey all the Jewish rituals.*⁵ But not even briefly did we(exc) do what they wanted *about circumcision.* We(exc) resisted them in order that the truth of the message about Christ might continue to *benefit* you.⁶ The *leaders in Jerusalem,* whom your new teachers respect, did not add anything to what I preach. *And I would add that* what status those leaders had did not influence me, because God does not favor certain/important persons [IDM] more than others.⁷ Instead of those leaders adding to the message that I tell people, they understood that I had been given the good message {God had given the good message to me} so that I might proclaim it to the non-Jews [MTY], just like God had given the good message to Peter so that he might tell it to those who are Jews [MTY].⁸ That is, just like God had empowered/authorized Peter in order that he might be an apostle *to bring God's message to the Jews* [MTY], he also had empowered/authorized me in order that I might be an apostle *to bring his message to the non-Jews.*⁹ And those *leaders* knew that God had kindly given to me this special work. So James, Peter, and John, the ones whom your new teachers *respect because they are* leaders [MET] *of the believers,* shook hands with us [IDM] *to show that they agreed that Barnabas and I are serving the Lord just like they are, and that we are preaching the same message that they are preaching.* They also agreed that we(exc) are the ones whom God was sending to *tell his message to non-Jews,* but that God is sending them to *tell his message to Jews* [MTY].¹⁰ They merely urged that we(exc) still remember to help the poor *fellow believers who live in Jerusalem.* That is exactly what I have been eager to do.

Galatians 2:11-21

THEME: *Later I rebuked Peter for not behaving according to the gospel, in that he was encouraging non-Jews to adopt Jewish laws and rituals.*

¹¹ But *later while I was at Antioch city,* after Peter came there, I told him directly [SYN] that what he was doing was wrong.¹² *This is what happened. Peter went to Antioch and started eating regularly with non-Jewish believers there.* Later there were certain *Jewish believers who came to Antioch who claimed that James, the leader of the congregations in Jerusalem,* had sent them. But when *those certain men* came, Peter gradually quit *eating* with the non-Jewish believers and would not associate with them. He was afraid that the *Jewish believers from Jerusalem would criticize him for associating with non-Jews.*¹³ Also, the other *Jewish believers who were in Antioch* [SYN] acted *<insincerely/in a way that they knew was not right>* along with Peter. The result was that they convinced even Barnabas to *stop associating with the non-Jewish believers!*¹⁴ But when I realized that they were not acting according to the truth of the message about Christ, *when all the fellow believers there were present,* I told Peter *the following:* "Although you(sg) are a Jew, *you often conduct yourself like non-Jews do by disregarding Jewish laws about food. When you are among non-Jews, you(sg) do not customarily conduct yourself at all like Jews do.* So, *<now it is wrong that you(sg) are causing non-Jews to think that they must obey all the Jewish rituals and customs!/why are you(sg) causing non-Jews to think that they must obey all the Jewish rituals and customs?>*" [RHQ]¹⁵ Some of us *believers* were born as Jews. We(exc) were **not born as non-Jews.** *We Jews have always considered non-Jews to be 'sinners' because they do not obey the Jewish rituals and laws.*¹⁶ But we(exc) now know that it is not because some person obeys the laws *that God gave to Moses that God erases the record of that person's sins. God erases the record of a person's sins only if that person trusts in what Jesus Christ has done.* Even we(exc) Jews trusted **Christ Jesus.** We(exc) did that in order that God would erase the record of our sins because of our trusting Christ, and not because of our obeying the laws *that God gave to Moses. God has said that he will never erase the record of people's sins just because of their obeying those laws.*¹⁷ Furthermore, because we(exc) Jews desired that God would erase the record of our sins because of our relationship with Christ, *it means that we realized that we ourselves were sinners like non-Jews, whom we called sinners, because we(exc) also were not obeying the Jewish rituals and laws. But <we(inc) certainly cannot conclude that it is Christ who causes us to sin./should we conclude that it is Christ who causes us to sin?>*" [RHQ] *No, Christ certainly does not cause anyone to sin.*

¹⁸ So if I should again believe *that God would erase the record of my sins because of my obeying the laws that he gave to Moses* [MET], *I would be like a man who rebuilds an old building that he tore down.* It would soon be clear that I am one

who disobeys those same laws that God gave to Moses. ¹⁹ When I realized that I could not earn God's favor by obeying the laws that he gave to Moses, I decided not to respond to what those laws demanded [MET], just like a dead person does not respond to anything. Now I live to honor/serve God. ²⁰ It is as though I was with Christ when he was crucified {died on the cross} [MET] (OR, *It is as though my old way of life ended when Christ died on the cross.*) ²⁰ No longer am I directing the way I behave as I did before I believed in Christ. Now Christ is directing how I behave. And whatever I do now while I live, I do it trusting in God's Son. He is the one who loved me and offered himself as a sacrifice for me. ²¹ I am not rejecting as useless what God did for me <kindly/that I did not deserve>, as my opponents are doing. I fully accept that God saved me by acting kindly towards me. If it is because people obey the laws that God gave to Moses that God erases the record of their sins, then Christ died <for nothing/needlessly>.

Galatians 3:1-5

THEME: *Because you trusted in Christ, not because you obeyed the laws God gave Moses, you received the Holy Spirit and now experience his working among you.*

3 ¹ You fellow believers who live in Galatia are very foolish! <Someone must have put an evil spell on you!/Did someone put an evil spell on you?> [RHQ] I clearly explained to you [SYN] what Jesus Christ accomplished when he was crucified {he died on the cross}. ² So, I want you to tell me one thing: *Do you think that it was because you obeyed the laws God gave Moses that you received the Holy Spirit? Do you not know that* [RHQ] it was because when you heard the good message concerning Christ, you trusted in him? ³ You are acting so foolishly [RHQ]! You first became Christians as a result of God's Spirit enabling you. So <do you now think it is by your own human efforts that you will continue to grow spiritually?/you should not now think that it is by what you yourselves do that you will continue to grow spiritually!> [RHQ] ⁴ Keep in mind that *if what God has done for you was because of your obeying the laws that God gave to Moses and not because of trusting in Christ, when others caused you to suffer, <you suffered many things needlessly!/did you not suffer many things needlessly?>* [RHQ] *I certainly hope that you did not suffer like that needlessly.* ⁵ When God now generously gives to you his Spirit and performs miracles among you, *do you think that it is* [RHQ] because you obey the laws that God gave to Moses? *Surely you know that it is because when you heard the good message about Christ, you trusted in him* [RHQ]!

Galatians 3:6-12

THEME: *It is those Jews and non-Jews who trust Christ who are Abraham's spiritual descendants, because those who seek to be justified by obeying the laws that God gave Moses are condemned by God.*

⁶ What you have experienced is as Moses wrote in the Scriptures about Abraham. He wrote that Abraham trusted God, and as a result, he was considered as being righteous {God erased the record of his sins}. ⁷ You must realize, therefore, that it is those who trust in what Christ has done who are like Abraham's descendants [MET] because they trust in God as Abraham did. ⁸ Furthermore, God planned beforehand that it was when non-Jews trusted him that he would erase the record of their sins. Moses wrote in the Scriptures [PRS] this good message that God told Abraham: "Because of what you did, I will bless people in [MTY] all nations." ⁹ So, we can conclude that it is those who trust in what Christ has done whom God blesses. That includes all non-Jews and Jews who trust him, along with Abraham, the one who trusted him long ago. ¹⁰ That is, God will eternally punish all those who mistakenly think that God will erase the record of their sins as a result of their obeying the laws that God gave to Moses. What is written in the Scriptures is that God will eternally punish everyone who does not continuously and completely obey all the laws that Moses wrote. ¹¹ But God has declared that if he erases the record of anyone's sins, it will not be as a result of their obeying the laws God gave Moses. This is evident because the Scriptures say, "Every person whose record of sins God erases because that person trusts God will live spiritually." ¹² But when God gave his laws to the Jews, he did not say that a person must trust him. Instead God said that it is those who obey all God's laws, continuously and completely, who will live.

Galatians 3:13-14

THEME: *Christ was condemned instead of us, so that God might bless the non-Jews just as he blessed Abraham, and so that we might receive the Spirit.*

¹³ Even though we humans have not continuously and completely obeyed God's laws, Christ rescued us from God punishing us eternally. Christ rescued us by his being the one God condemned instead of God condemning us. What is written {someone/Moses wrote} in the Scriptures shows that this is true. It is written {He wrote}, "God has already decided that he will punish eternally anyone whom people execute for his crimes and whose body they hang on a tree." ¹⁴ Christ rescued us in order that as a result of what Christ Jesus has done, God might bless the non-Jews, similar to how God blessed Abraham. He also desired that as a result of our trusting Christ, we all might receive the Spirit whom God promised to give to us.

Galatians 3:15-18

THEME: *By giving his laws to the Jews, God has not canceled what he promised to Abraham much earlier concerning his descendant, Christ. Just like God gave his blessings to Abraham just because he promised to do so, he freely gives his blessings to us.*

¹⁵ My fellow believers, I will now *illustrate* by referring to human *relationships*. After an agreement is confirmed by two people {two people have signed an agreement}, no one can reject it or add to it. ¹⁶ God declared to Abraham and his descendant that he was promising to *give blessings to Abraham*. The words that God spoke were not “and your descendants.” He was *not* referring to many persons. Instead, he was referring to one person, who is Christ, *because the words that God spoke were*, “and your descendant.” ¹⁷ This is what I am saying: Since God gave the laws to the Jews 430 years after he declared to Abraham what he was promising to do for Abraham, those laws do not cancel that agreement with Abraham that God himself had previously agreed about [PRS]. ¹⁸ Remember that if it is because *we obey God’s laws that he gives to us what he has promised to give to us*, then it is not *just* because he *has* promised that he would give those things to us. God freely gave to Abraham what he had promised to give to him, just because God had promised that he would give it to him. Similarly, it is not because we obey God’s laws that God gives to us what he has promised to give to us.

Galatians 3:19-25

THEME: *God gave his laws to supervise us sinful Jews until Christ, Abraham’s promised descendant, would come.*

¹⁹ So, if someone should ask, “Why did God later give his laws to Moses?” I would reply that it was in order that people might realize how sinful they were. Those laws were valid until Jesus came. He was the descendant that God was referring to when he made the promises to Abraham. The laws were given {God gave his laws} to Moses by God’s causing angels to speak to him. Moses was the mediator, the one who told the laws to the people. ²⁰ Now, when a mediator functions, one person is not speaking with another directly; but God himself made his promises directly to Abraham.

²¹ If someone should ask, “When God gave his laws to Moses long after he told Abraham what he was promising to give to him, was he changing his mind?” I would reply that God certainly did not change his mind when he did that! If God had given a law that could enable people to live *eternally*, then it actually would be because of people *obeying that law* that God would erase the record of their sins. ²² But instead, what we read in the Scriptures [PRS] is that God *caused all people to be unable to escape being punished for their sins* [MET], just like people in prison are unable to escape [PRS, MET]. God did that in order that he might give what he promised to those who trust Jesus Christ, just because they trust him. ²³ Before God revealed the good message about trusting in Christ, the laws [PRS] that God gave to Moses were *confining/imprisoning us Jews* [MET], as a prisoner in jail is confined. We were unable to escape obeying those [MET] laws. This happened in order that we might believe the good message concerning Christ, the message that God would reveal later. ²⁴ Like a father supervises his immature son by appointing a servant to take care of him [MET], God was supervising us by his laws [MET, PRS] until Christ came. He did this in order that he might erase the record of our sins only because we trust Christ. ²⁵ But now that God has revealed the message about trusting in Christ, the laws that God gave to Moses are no longer supervising us Jews [PRS, MET].

Galatians 3:26-29

THEME: *Because of our relationship with Christ we are Abraham’s spiritual descendants, and God’s heirs, no longer like slaves.*

²⁶ Now all of you Jews and non-Jews are as though you are God’s children because you trusted Christ Jesus. ²⁷ That is, you who began a relationship with Christ when you were baptized identified yourselves [MET] with Christ. ²⁸ If you are believers, it does not matter to God if you are Jews or non-Jews; slaves or ones who are not slaves; males or females, because all of you are as one sort of person because of your relationship with Christ Jesus. ²⁹ Furthermore, since you belong to Christ, you are like Abraham’s descendants because you trust God as Abraham did, and you will possess/receive all that God has promised [MET].

Galatians 4:1-7

THEME: *Each of you is no longer like a slave, but a child of God and an heir of what he has promised.*

4 ¹ Now, I will further discuss children and heirs: An heir is a person who will later control all that his father has. But as long as that heir is a child, others control him, with the result that he is just like a slave [MET]. ² Until the day that his father previously determined, other persons supervise him and manage his property. ³ Likewise, when we(inc) (OR, we(exc) Jews) were like young children [MET], we had to obey rules and rituals about external and material things. These rules controlled us like masters control their slaves [MET]. ⁴ But exactly at the time [MTY] that God had previously determined, he sent Jesus, who is <his Son/the man who is also God>, into the world. Jesus was born to a human mother. He had to obey the laws that God gave to Moses. ⁵ God sent Jesus in order that he might redeem us who had to obey God’s laws. God wanted us all to receive from God the status of being his children [MET]. ⁶ Furthermore, we know that we are God’s children because God sent the Spirit, who is intimately related to his Son, to live in our <inner beings/hearts>. The Spirit enables us to pray fervently, “Daddy, Father!” This shows that we are God’s children. ⁷ So, because of what God has done,

no longer is *each of you like* a slave. Instead, *each of you is* a child of God. Furthermore, since *each of you is* God's child, God has also made you one who will receive all that he has promised.

Galatians 4:8-20

THEME: *I plead with you to do as I did when I was with you, and not obey all the Jewish rules and rituals.*

⁸ When you did not have a relationship with God [MET], you served gods that really did not exist [MET]. You were their slaves. ⁹ But now you have come to know God. Perhaps *it would be better to say that now God knows you. So now you are acting foolishly!* <You are again believing *that by obeying* rules and rites *you will benefit spiritually!*/Why are you again believing *that by obeying* rules and rituals *you will benefit spiritually?*> [RHQ] *Those rules are ineffective and inadequate!* <You are wanting to *obey them* again [MET] like slaves obey their masters./Are you wanting to *obey them* again [MET] like slaves obey their masters?> [RHQ] ¹⁰ You *non-Jews* are carefully practicing *Jewish rules and rituals about what you should do* <on *Sabbaths/on Jewish days of rest*> and on *the first day of each month* and on *special seasons* and years.

¹¹ I <worry/am concerned> about your *mistaken ideas*. *I do not want* to have so strenuously served you in vain. ¹² My fellow believers, I strongly urge you that you do as I do. *Stop thinking that you have to obey Jewish* <rules and rituals/ceremonial laws>. *When I was with you, I did not obey all the Jewish rules and rituals*, just like you *did not obey them*.

At that time you treated me entirely as you should have [LIT]. ¹³ You know that the first time I told the good message to you, *I went to your area to regain my health, because I was physically weak*. ¹⁴ *Although* you might have *despised me because* I was physically weak, you did not despise me or act contemptuously/disrespectfully toward me. Instead, you welcomed me like *you would welcome* an angel from God. *You welcomed me* like *you would welcome* Christ Jesus! ¹⁵ <I am disappointed that you have forgotten *that then you declared that you were* pleased with *me*./Have you forgotten *that then you declared that you were* pleased with *me?*> [RHQ] I can testify that you *would have done anything to help me*. You would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me, *if that would have helped me!* ¹⁶ So I am very disappointed that you *now act as though* [RHQ] I have become hostile to you *because I have kept* speaking the true message about Christ to you. ¹⁷ Those *who are insisting on obeying Jewish rules* are eagerly showing interest in you, but *what they are doing is* not good. They even want you not to associate with *me and other true* believers, because they want you to eagerly show interest in them, *not in us*. ¹⁸ But *just like* it always feels good to have others show that they appreciate you, *I would like* you always to *appreciate me*, and not only when I am with you. ¹⁹ You *who are like* my children, *once again* I am very worried/concerned about you [MET], *and I will continue* to be worried/concerned until Christ's *nature be developed* in you *completely and wholeheartedly* [MET] *as a child* becomes developed *in his mother's womb*. ²⁰ But I do wish that I could be with you now and that I might talk *more gently with you*, because I do not know *what to do about you while we are apart*.

Galatians 4:21-31

THEME: *Because of our relationship with Christ we are not subject to Mosaic law; being Abraham's spiritual descendants we are free from such bondage.*

²¹ Some of you desire to *obey all the laws* that God gave Moses. *I say that you should consider* [RHQ] *the implications of what Moses wrote* in the Scriptures. ²² He wrote that Abraham became the father of two sons. His female slave, Hagar, bore one son, and his wife Sarah, who was not a slave, bore the other. ²³ Also, *the sons differed*. *Ishmael, the son born by* the female slave, was conceived naturally. But *Isaac, the son borne by* his wife who was not a slave, was conceived *miraculously* as a result of what God had promised Abraham. ²⁴ *I am telling you this* as an illustration. These *two women* symbolize two agreements. *God made the first agreement, which involved obeying the laws that God gave to Moses at Sinai* mountain. *Because that agreement forces those who accept it to keep obeying all its rules* [MET], *it is like a slave mother who gives birth to slaves*. So Hagar, *the female slave, symbolizes this agreement*. ²⁵ Also, the word 'Hagar' is associated with Sinai mountain, *which is in Arabia land*. Hagar, *the female slave, also represents* Jerusalem city as it is today. Jerusalem city is *like* [MET] a slave mother, and *those who live there* [PRS] *are like* her slave children [MET] *because they all must obey the laws that God gave to Moses*. ²⁶ But there will be a new Jerusalem in heaven [MTY], and we *who will go there* are free from *having to obey Jewish laws*. We *who belong to that city consider it to be* our mother [MET] city *because we are God's true children*. ²⁷ *Our new city will have more people than those who live in Jerusalem now*. *It will be just like* Isaiah foretold about the people whom he expected would come back to Jerusalem from exile. *He expected that they would be more numerous than those who were taken into exile*. *He wrote:*

You who live in Jerusalem, you will rejoice! Now you have no children, like a barren woman who does not give birth to children! *But some day you will shout with joy,* <without restraint/as loudly as you can>, *even though now you are few, like a woman who cannot give birth to children, and you feel deserted*. *You will be very happy* because you will have *many children who will come to you*. *Those children will be more than the children any woman with a husband could have borne.*^a

²⁸ Now, my fellow believers, you have become children of God as a result of believing God's promise to us, as Isaac was born as a result of Abraham believing what God promised to him [MET].

^a Literally: "Rejoice, barren you-who not bears. Burst-out and shout, you-who not strains-to-give-birth. You have cause for joy because many are the children of-the desolate. They are more-numerous than the children of-her-who has the husband."

²⁹ Also, long ago Abraham's son Ishmael, the one who was conceived naturally, caused trouble for Abraham's son Isaac, who was conceived supernaturally [MET]. Similarly, now those who think that we must obey the laws that God gave Moses in order that God will save us are causing trouble for those who are trusting Abraham's descendant, Christ. ³⁰ But these are [RHQ] the words in the Scriptures [PRS]: "The son of the woman who was not a slave will inherit what his father has. The female slave's son will certainly not inherit those things. So send away from this place the female slave and her son [MET]!" That means that you should certainly expel from your groups those who insist that we obey all the laws God gave Moses [MET]. ³¹ My fellow believers, Hagar symbolizes the laws that God gave to Moses. But we are not those who must obey all the laws that God gave to Moses [MET]. So we are not the female slave Hagar's spiritual descendants [MET]. But Sarah's descendants are those who were born as a result of believing what God promised to Abraham. So we are the spiritual descendants of Sarah, the woman who was not a slave [MET].

Galatians 5:1-6

THEME: *Reject the false teaching that you must be circumcised, and do not become enslaved to rules and rituals again, otherwise Christ will not benefit you at all.*

5 ¹ It is in order that we might live without <being obliged to/having to> obey all the Jewish rituals that Christ freed us from God condemning us because of our disobeying those rituals. So, firmly reject the false teaching that someone must circumcise you, and do not live like slaves again [MET] by letting others force you to obey those rules and rituals again. ² Consider very carefully what I, Paul, an apostle, now tell you: If you are permitting yourself to be circumcised {someone to circumcise you}, what Christ has done for you will not benefit you at all. ³ Instead, I solemnly declare again to every man who is circumcised {has someone circumcise him} in order for God to accept him, that you must perfectly obey all of the laws that God gave Moses, in order for God to save you. ⁴ Those of you who are sure that God will erase the record of your sins because you obey the laws that God gave to Moses, you have separated yourselves from Christ. You have abandoned/rejected God's true method of saving you, which was by kindly erasing the record of your sins, in a way that you did not deserve. ⁵ But we who have a relationship with Christ and who trust in Christ are eagerly waiting to receive what God's Spirit assures us that we can expect. We can expect to receive it because God has erased the record of our sins. ⁶ As for us who have a relationship with Christ Jesus, God is not concerned whether we are circumcised or not circumcised. Instead, God is concerned about whether we trust in Christ, with the result that we love other people.

Galatians 5:7-12

THEME: *Although someone has confused you, I am sure that you will not accept his false teaching, and that God will punish him.*

⁷ You were progressing well spiritually [MET]. You should not have let someone influence you so that now you are not believing the true message about Christ [RHQ]! ⁸ God, the one who chose you, is not the one who is persuading you to think like this! ⁹ Remember that this false doctrine that someone is teaching you will affect all of you, just like [MET] a little yeast causes all of the dough to swell up. ¹⁰ Nevertheless, because of my relationship with the Lord, I am certain that you will think only as I do about forcing people to obey rules and rituals. Furthermore, God will punish anyone who is confusing you by teaching this false message, even if he is an important person. ¹¹ But, my fellow believers, although someone claims that I am proclaiming that men must be circumcised, I certainly am not still proclaiming that. Remember that the Jews are still <persecuting me/causing me to suffer>. If I were still proclaiming that men must be circumcised in order for God to accept them, <the Jews would not be persecuting me./why would the Jews be persecuting me?> [RHQ] They would [RHQ] not be <persecuting me/causing me to suffer> because then the Jews would no longer be offended. They <are offended/do not want to accept what I teach> because I proclaim that Christ, the Messiah, died on the cross [MTY]. ¹² I would even wish that those who are disturbing you by insisting that men be circumcised would also emasculate [EUP] themselves, with the result that they would be expelled from your congregations!

Galatians 5:13-15

THEME: *Although you are free from having to obey Jewish rules, instead of doing what your self-directed nature desires, love and serve each other.*

¹³ My fellow believers, God chose you in order that you might live without having to obey rules and rituals. But do not assume that because you are free from having to obey rules and rituals, God permits you to do what your self-directed nature desires. Instead, constantly, as you love each other, serve each other. ¹⁴ Keep in mind that we can sum up all of the laws that God has given us in one law, which is: "You must love each person you come in contact with, just like you love yourself." ¹⁵ Since you are attacking and injuring [MET] each other by the things that you say [MET], I warn you that if you continue doing that, you will totally ruin each other spiritually.

Galatians 5:16-18

THEME: *Let God's Spirit direct you, and then you will not do what your self-directed nature desires.*

¹⁶ So I tell you this: Constantly let God's Spirit direct you. If you do that, you will certainly not do the things that your self-directed nature wants you to do. ¹⁷ Your self-directed nature <opposes God's Spirit/does not want you to do what God's Spirit wants you to do>, but also his Spirit opposes your self-directed nature. These two are always <fighting

with/opposing> each other. The result is that you do not *constantly* do the *good* deeds that you truly desire *to do*.¹⁸ But when you are led by God's Spirit {when God's Spirit directs you}, you *can do what pleases God*, now that you are no longer obligated to *obey all the laws that God gave Moses*.

Galatians 5:19-26

THEME: *Those who think evil thoughts and do evil things will not receive the blessings of God's rule, but God's Spirit produces many good qualities in our lives.*

¹⁹ You already know how people think and act [PRS] because of their self-directed nature. These are *some of the things that they do*: People are sexually immoral. People commit unnatural sexual acts. People act indecently.²⁰ People worship false gods and things that represent those gods. People perform <rituals in order that evil spirits might act for them/sorcery>. People are hostile to others. People quarrel with each other. People are <jealous/resent other people's status>. People behave angrily. People try <to get others to think highly of them/to exalt themselves> and <do not consider what others want/act selfishly>. People do not associate with others. People associate only with those who agree with them.²¹ People want what others have. People get drunk. People <revel/participate in wild parties>. And people do other things like these. I warn you now, just like I warned you previously, that the ones who constantly act and think like this will not receive what God has for his own people when he begins to rule over us.²² But God's Spirit causes us to do these things: We love others. We are joyful. We are peaceful. We are patient. We are kind. We are good. We are ones whom others can trust.²³ We are gentle. We control our behavior. There is no law that says people should not think and act in such ways.²⁴ Furthermore, we who belong to Christ Jesus have stopped obeying our self-directed nature and stopped doing all the evil things that we desire to do [MET]. It is as though [MET] we nailed them to the cross!

²⁵ Since God's Spirit has caused us to be spiritually alive, we should conduct our lives the way the Spirit directs us.²⁶ We should not be saying how great we are. We should not be making ourselves more important than others. We should not envy each other.

Galatians 6:1-6

THEME: *Gently correct anyone among you who is sinning, and help each other without thinking you are better than others.*

6¹ My fellow believers, if you discover that a person among your congregation is sinning, those of you whom God's Spirit is directing and empowering should gently correct that person. Furthermore, each of you who corrects another person should be very cautious in order that you might not sin like that when you are tempted {when something tempts you}.² When there are ones who have problems, you should help each other. By doing that, you will complete what Christ requires.³ Keep in mind that those who refuse to help others because they think that they are more important than other people, although they are not really more important, are deceiving themselves.⁴ Instead, each of you should constantly test/judge and decide if you can approve what you yourself are doing and thinking. Then you can boast because of what you yourself are doing and thinking, and not because what you are doing is superior to what other persons are doing.⁵ Keep in mind that you must each perform your own individual tasks.⁶ You who are being taught {whom others are teaching} God's truth should share your various material things [EUP] with your teachers.

Galatians 6:7-10

THEME: *We should not tire of doing good, but instead, we should do good to everyone, especially to believers.*

⁷ You should not deceive yourselves. Remember that God is never outwitted {no one ever fools God}. Just like a farmer will reap exactly the kind of crop that he plants [MET], God will reward people according to what they have done [MET].⁸ God will punish eternally those who do what their self-directed natures urge them to do. But those who please God's Spirit will live forever with God because of what God's Spirit does for them.⁹ But we should not <tire of/become discouraged while> doing what pleases God, because eventually, at the time that God has determined, we will receive a reward [MET], if we do not stop doing the good things that we have been doing.¹⁰ So, whenever we have opportunities, we should do what is good to all people. But especially we should do what is good to all our fellow believers.

Galatians 6:11-16

THEME: *Some people want you to be circumcised only so that they will not be persecuted for proclaiming what Christ accomplished for us on the cross, but that is the only thing that I will boast about.*

¹¹ I am now writing this last part of this letter to you in my own handwriting. Notice the large letters with which I am now writing. I am doing this in order that I might emphasize this.¹² Some Jewish believers

are trying to force you to perform certain rituals so that other Jews will think highly of them. They are insisting that you be circumcised (that someone must circumcise you). They are doing that only in order that other Jews would no longer (persecute them/cause them to suffer) for proclaiming that God will save us because of our trusting in what Christ accomplished when he died on the cross [MTY, MET].¹³ The reason that I say that is that the ones who are insisting that you be circumcised (that someone circumcise you) do not themselves fully obey the laws that God gave to Moses. Instead, they desire that you let someone circumcise you in order that they might boast to those Jews who would (persecute them/cause them to suffer) that you did that because they insisted [MTY] that you do it.¹⁴ I myself, however, strongly desire that I never boast about anything like that. The only thing I will boast about is what our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished by dying on the cross [MTY]. Because of what Christ did on the cross, I no longer am interested in the things that those who do not trust Christ [MTY] think are important, and those people are no longer interested in the things that I [MET] think are important.¹⁵ I will boast about Christ dying on the cross because God is concerned neither that people are circumcised nor that people are not circumcised. Instead, he is concerned only that people conduct their lives in a completely new way.¹⁶ I pray that God will give inner peace and act kindly towards all who will act according to this new way of life. It is all those who live according to this new way of life who are now truly God's people [MET], as the Israelite people were God's people previously.

Galatians 6:17

THEME: I have suffered enough for declaring the truth about Jesus, so do not trouble me again.

¹⁷ Finally, I say that people have <persecuted me/caused me to suffer> for declaring the truth about Jesus, and as a result I have scars on my body. Your new teachers do not have scars like mine! So do not trouble/bother me about these matters again!

Galatians 6:18

THEME: I pray that God may act kindly within you.

¹⁸ My fellow believers, I pray that our Lord Jesus Christ will kindly accomplish what he desires within you. <Amen!/May it be so!>

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Christians at Ephesus. We call this letter Ephesians

Ephesians 1:1-2

THEME: I am writing this to you people of God in Ephesus, asking that God will bless you.

1 ¹I, Paul, am an apostle whom God appointed <to represent/to proclaim the message about> Christ Jesus because that is what God wanted. *I am writing this letter* to you who are the people of God in Ephesus city. *You are people who* <faithfully/continue to> trust in Christ Jesus and who have a close relationship with him. ²*I pray that* God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord will continue to act kindly toward you and cause you to have *inner* peace.

Ephesians 1:3-14

THEME: We should praise God for having chosen and redeemed us, having revealed his plan to unite all things under Christ, and causing Christ to rule over all his people.

³Praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of our relationship with Christ, he has blessed us spiritually in every way by giving us blessings that come from heaven. ⁴Before God created the world, he chose us to be his people because of our <relationship with/union with> Christ, in order that *God could consider* us to be completely holy [DOU]. Because *God* loves us, ⁵he decided long ago that he would adopt us to be *as though we were* his own children because of what Jesus Christ *has done*. He decided to do that because it pleased him to do that, ⁶in order that we would praise him for acting very kindly toward us in a wonderful way that we did not deserve, because of our relationship with his beloved Son {*Son whom he loves*}.

⁷When the blood of Christ *flowed when he died* [MTY], *it was as though* he paid a price to free/save us *from the guilt of our sins*. That <provided a way/made it possible> for God to act very kindly toward us to forgive us for having sinned. ⁸He acted very kindly toward us and enabled us to become wise about many [HYP] things and to understand his truth. ⁹He has enabled us to know the things that he had planned secretly (OR, that he had not revealed to anyone yet). He did that because he wanted to do that, and because he planned to do that by means of the things Christ would do. ¹⁰God planned that at the time that *he appointed*, he would unite all things/beings in heaven and all things/beings on earth (OR, all beings in heaven and all things on earth), and cause Christ to be the one who will rule them [MET]. ¹¹Because of our close relationship with Christ, God has also chosen us(*inc*) (OR, us(*exc*) Jews) to receive what he has promised *to give* us. He decided long ago to do that. It was exactly what he planned. He accomplishes everything exactly as he plans and desires, ¹²in order that we(*exc*) Jews, who confidently expected the Messiah *to do great things for us* before *the non-Jews expected such things* (OR, we(*inc*) who were already confidently expecting Christ *to do great things for us*) will praise him for his greatness. ¹³You *Ephesians* also heard the true message, the good message about how God saves you. *People* put their seal on something to show that *it belongs to them*. Similarly, when you believed *in Christ*, God *showed that you also belong to him by sending you* the Holy Spirit as he promised to do [MET]. ¹⁴The Holy Spirit is *like* [MET] a <deposit/down payment>. That is, he <guarantees/assures us> that *we will receive* all that God has promised to give us, at the time when God will give to those who belong to him [MET] everything that *Christ paid for them to have*. *God showed that you belong to him* in order that you would praise him for his greatness.

Ephesians 1:15-23

THEME: I thank God for your faith, and pray that you will understand more about how powerfully he works on our behalf, just like he did when he raised Christ from the dead and made him ruler over everything.

¹⁵Because of *what God has done for you*, and because *people* told me that you continue to trust in the Lord Jesus and that you love all those who belong to God, ¹⁶I thank God for you constantly [LIT, HYP]. I <mention/pray for> you constantly, whenever I pray. ¹⁷*I pray* that God, who is the glorious/wonderful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, may cause his Spirit to make you wise, and that his Spirit will reveal *God to you* so that you may fully know him. ¹⁸And I pray that God would enable you to understand [MTY] his truth within your <inner beings/hearts>, in order that in your <inner beings/hearts> you may know the things that we believers should confidently expect to receive because he chose us *to be his people*. And I pray that you will know how God will bless his people in a very wonderful way *when we finally receive* all that he has promised to give us. ¹⁹And *I pray that* you will know how very powerfully *God acts* for us who continue to trust *in Christ*. He works powerfully for us ²⁰just like he acted powerfully for Christ when he caused Christ to become alive again after he died, and put him in the place of highest/greatest honor [MTY] in heaven. ²¹*There*, Christ is the supreme ruler over every powerful spirit of every level of authority. His rank is much higher than any of them can receive, not only now, but forever. ²²God has caused all beings to be subject to Christ [MTY], and he has also appointed Christ, who rules over all things, to

rule [MET] over all believers. ²³We believers *relate to Christ like the parts of a person's body* [MET] *relate to its head*. Christ uses all *his power among us* just like he uses his power throughout the whole universe.

Ephesians 2:1-10

THEME: *Formerly we were all spiritually dead and were certain to be punished by God, but he acted very kindly toward us and saved us freely as a result of our faith in Christ.*

2 ¹Formerly, because you were habitually sinning [DOU], you were *◀spiritually dead/as unable to please God as a corpse [MET] is▶*. ²You were acting in the same *evil* way as those who oppose Christ [MTY] act. That is, you were behaving in the *evil* ways *that Satan wanted you to behave*. He rules over evil spiritual beings that no person can see [MTY]. He is the spirit who now powerfully controls the people who disobey God. ³Formerly, we all used to disobey God as they do. We did the things that our self-centered nature wanted us to do. We habitually did those *evil* deeds that our bodies and our minds wanted. When we were acting like that, it was certain that *God* would punish [MTY] us, just like he will certainly punish all other *evil people*.

⁴But God always acts very mercifully, and he loves us very much. ⁵As a result, even when we were *◀spiritually dead/as unable to please God as a corpse [MET] is▶* because we were habitually sinning, he enabled us to receive *spiritual/eternal* life because of our relationship with Christ. *Do not forget this: It is only* because God has acted so kindly toward you, in a way that you did not deserve, that you are saved {that he saved you} *from the guilt of your sin!* ⁶And *it is as though* God gave us spiritual life when he caused Christ Jesus to be alive again after he died [MET]. And *it is as though* God caused us to sit *and rule* [MTY] with him in heaven, ⁷in order that he might show to everyone at all times in the future that he has acted toward us in an extremely kind way because of what Christ Jesus *did for us*.

⁸It is *only* by God acting [PRS] *toward you* in a way that you did not deserve that you have been saved {that he has saved you} as a result of your trusting *in Christ*. You did not save yourselves. His saving you was his gift to you. ⁹He did not save any of you because of anything you yourselves did. The result is that no one can be proud of what they have done *to save themselves*. ¹⁰It is God who has made us what we are now. Because of our relationship with Christ Jesus, he has enabled us to receive *spiritual/eternal* life in order that we should conduct our lives habitually doing the good deeds that God previously planned for us to do.

Ephesians 2:11-22

THEME: *God brought you Gentiles into his family so that now you and Jewish believers both share the same blessings and form one group; you now have peace with each other and can come to God in prayer with the help of the Holy Spirit.*

¹¹You *Ephesians* were non-Jews from the time that you were born. The Jews *◀insult you/say that you are not God's people▶* by calling you 'those who are not circumcised.' They *proudly* call themselves 'we(exc) who are circumcised.' *They have allowed people to circumcise them to indicate that they are God's people, but* that has *only* changed their bodies, *not their ◀inner beings/hearts▶*. ¹²You should constantly remember these things: Formerly you did not have any relationship with Christ. You did not belong to the people of Israel, *the people whom God chose*. You did not know about the things God promised in his agreements *with his people*. You did not confidently expect *to go to heaven after you die* (OR, *that God would save you*). You *lived* in this world without knowing God. ¹³But now, because of your relationship with Christ Jesus, God has brought you, who had no relationship with him [MET], into his family [MET]. He did that because *you trusted in what Christ accomplished when his blood [MTY] flowed from his body when he died on the cross*.

¹⁴Christ himself *has caused us Jewish and non-Jewish believers* to have peace *with each other*. He has made both of *our groups* to become one *group*. *Just like people ◀tear down/demolish▶* a wall that separates *groups of people* [MET], he has destroyed the hatred *between Jews and non-Jews*. ¹⁵By dying [MTY] *for us on the cross* he made it no longer *necessary for us to obey* all the *Jewish* laws and rituals *in order to be saved*. He did that in order to enable the two *groups* to become one new group because of our relationship with him. The result was that he has caused us to have peace *with each other*.

¹⁶By *dying on the cross* [MTY] he caused both Jews and non-Jews to have a peaceful relationship with God. That is how he caused us to no longer be [MET] enemies *with God* (OR, *with each other*). ¹⁷He came to *earth* and proclaimed that you *non-Jews*, who did not have a relationship with [MET] God, and *us(exc) Jews*, who *considered that we(exc) belonged to [MET] God's family*, can *all* now have peace *with God*. ¹⁸*We know that he has done that* because we both, *Jews and non-Jews*, are *now* able to approach God the Father *in prayer* by the help of his Spirit, because of what Christ *has done*.

¹⁹So *God no longer treats you non-Jews as people treat* [MET] foreigners and strangers *who live among them* [MET]. Instead, along with all God's people, *it is as though* you have become citizens of a country that he rules over, and *as though you have become* members of the family of which *he is the father* [MET]. ²⁰*Just like* a building is built {as someone builds a building} on a foundation, *God has joined you into one group that originated/began* from what the apostles and prophets *taught*. Christ Jesus is the *most important one in that group, just like a cornerstone is the most important part of a building*. And ²¹just like *a builder might* join together all the parts of a building to make it a temple that *people will* dedicate to the Lord [MET], *Christ is continually causing all of you* who have a relationship with *him to be united, in order that you will become one holy group*. ²²And because of your relationship with Christ, God is joining you *non-Jews* together with *Jewish believers* to be *like* one building [MET] in which his Spirit lives.

Ephesians 3:1-13

THEME: *I am in prison because God appointed me to tell non-Jews that Christ is the source of great spiritual blessings for them.*

3 ¹ Because *God has done all this for you non-Jews*, I, Paul, *pray for you. I want you to know that it is because I serve Christ Jesus for your sake that I am in prison.* ² I *<assume that/think that probably>* someone has told you how God acted very kindly toward me, appointing me *so that I would proclaim the good message to you non-Jews.* ³ God revealed to me the message that he had not revealed to others. When you read what I have already written briefly about that, ⁴ you will be able to understand that I understand clearly that message about Christ. ⁵ Formerly, *God* did not reveal that message to anyone, but now his Spirit has revealed that message to his holy apostles and *<prophets/people who tell messages that come directly from God>*. ⁶ That message, which he has now revealed, is that because of our *(inc)* relationship with Christ Jesus, *all of us*, non-Jews as well as Jews [MTY], will receive the *great spiritual blessings that God has promised as we all form one group [MET] as a result of our believing the good message about Christ.* ⁷ By God powerfully enabling me, and because God acted kindly toward me, doing what I did not deserve, and chose me *to do that work*, I became one person who tells others this good message.

⁸ Although I am the least *worthy* of all God's people, God kindly *appointed* me to proclaim to the non-Jews the message about the great spiritual blessings that *they can receive* from Christ, ⁹ and to enable everyone to understand clearly how God accomplished what he planned. God, who created everything, *has now revealed* this message, which he never revealed to anyone before. ¹⁰ *What he planned* was that all *<believers/people who belong to Christ>* would be the ones who would reveal to all the ranks [DOU] of spiritual beings in heaven that what God had planned is wise in every way. ¹¹ That is what God had always planned, and it is what he accomplished by what our Lord Jesus *has done.* ¹² Because of what he has done and because of our relationship with him, *when we pray* we can approach God confidently and without being afraid. ¹³ So I ask that you do not be discouraged because of my suffering many things for you *here in prison*. You should feel honored that I am *willing to suffer these things for your sake.*

Ephesians 3:14-21

THEME: *I pray that God's Spirit will empower you, that you may experience how great is Christ's love to you, and that God may make you all that he intends for you to be.*

¹⁴ Because *God has done all this for you*, I kneel and pray [MTY] to *God our Father.* ¹⁵ He is the one who is *like* a father of all *the believers who are now in heaven* and those who are still on the earth. ¹⁶ I pray that, using his unlimited resources, he will cause you to be strengthened by his Spirit {cause his Spirit to strengthen you} in your *<inner beings/hearts>* with all *God's power.* ¹⁷ That is, I pray that because of your trusting in Christ, his *Spirit* may live in your *<inner beings/hearts>* (OR, he may live in your hearts). And I pray that because you love *Christ* firmly and faithfully/continually [MET], you, ¹⁸ along with all other believers, may be able to know how very [DOU] much Christ loves *us(inc).* ¹⁹ I want you to experience how very deeply he loves us, even though it is not possible for us to understand fully *how much he loves us.* And I pray that God will enable you to be filled with {have a full measure of} all the *qualities of his character that he himself has.*

²⁰ *God* is able to do much *<greater things/more>* than we could ask him to do, or even that we might think that he can do, according to (OR, by) his power that is working within us. ²¹ Because of our relationship with Christ Jesus, may all *<believers/those who belong to him>* praise him forever. *<Amen!/May it be so!>*

Ephesians 4:1-16

THEME: *Conduct your lives in a way that shows that you are God's people; do all that you can to keep all the believers united; and remember that Christ has given various abilities to each of his people, in order that they may be united and grow spiritually and become like Christ.*

4 ¹ Therefore I, who am in prison because *I serve* the Lord *Jesus*, urge you, whom God has chosen *to be his people, to do these things:* Conduct your lives as *God's people* should. ² Always be humble, and do not demand your own rights. Be patient *with each other*, and, because you love each other, endure each other's *<irritating behavior/behavior that you do not like>*. ³ *God's Spirit* has caused you to be united *with one another*, so do all that you can to remain united *with one another* by acting peacefully *toward each other.* ⁴ *All we believers form just one group [MET]*, and there is only one *Holy Spirit*, just like you were chosen {*God chose you*} in order that you all might confidently keep expecting the same *good things that we do*, as a result of his choosing you. ⁵ There is only one Lord, *Jesus Christ.* We all believe the same *teaching about him. It was to show that we belong to him* alone that *we had someone* baptize us. ⁶ There is one God, who is the *spiritual Father of all us believers.* He *rules* over all his people; he enables all his people *to do powerful things* (OR, he sustains all his people); and his *Spirit lives* in all his people.

⁷ Christ has generously given to each one of us spiritual gifts, just like he decided to give them. ⁸ *When Christ gave gifts to his people, it was similar to what the Psalmist said about God receiving tribute money from those whom he had conquered,* When he ascended to heaven, he gave as gifts to people the things *that he had taken* from the people whom he captured:

⁹The words 'he ascended' certainly imply/indicate [RHQ] that Christ had also previously descended to the earth. ¹⁰Christ, who descended to *earth*, is also the one who ascended to the most exalted position in heaven, in order that he might show his power [MTY] throughout the universe. ¹¹He appointed some people to be apostles. He appointed some people to be <prophets/ones who reveal messages that come directly from God>. He appointed some people to be <evangelists/ones whose work is to tell others the message about Christ>. He appointed some people to lead and teach *the congregations*. ¹²He appointed all of these in order that they would prepare God's people to do God's work, so that all the people who belong to Christ [MET] might become *spiritually* mature. ¹³He wants all of us *believers* to be united *because* we all believe in the Son of God and *because* we all know *him*. He wants us to become spiritually mature; that is, he wants us to be <perfect/all that God wants us to be>, *just like* Christ was <perfect/all that God wanted him to be>. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be *spiritually immature*, like [MET] little children *are immature*. We will no longer be constantly *changing what we believe*, like [MET] waves of the sea are *constantly changing as the wind blows and* tosses them back and forth. We will not allow people who teach *what is false* and who <scheme/try cleverly> to deceive/influence us. ¹⁵Instead, by loving *others* as we behave according to God's truth (OR, speak in a loving manner what is true), we will become more and more like Christ in every way. He is the one *who controls/guides all his people* [MET], *just like a person's head controls/guides his body*. ¹⁶He *enables all those who belong to him to mature spiritually*. Specifically, they will become *mature spiritually* by loving each other and by each of them doing the work *that God wants them to do*. That is like [MET] a person's body *grows stronger*, as each part of the body is joined to the others by the ligaments and as each part <functions properly/works as it should>.

Ephesians 4:17-32

THEME: *You should conduct yourselves in a way that matches your new character; so stop doing the harmful things that unbelievers do, and do good to one another.*

¹⁷By the authority of the Lord *Jesus*, I strongly <affirm/tell you> that you must no longer conduct your lives like unbelievers do. The futile/worthless way in which they think [MET] *controls how they conduct their lives*. ¹⁸They are unable to think clearly [MET] *about what is right and what is wrong*. Because they have decided that they do not want to know about God and because they stubbornly [IDM] refuse to *listen to his message*, they do not have the *eternal life* that God gives us. ¹⁹The result is that because they have ceased <to care/to be concerned> *about what is right and what is wrong*, they have <deliberately committed themselves to doing/wholeheartedly decided to do> the shameful things that their bodies want, and they commit all kinds of immoral acts, and continually are eager to do more of those things.

²⁰But when you learned *about* Christ, you did not learn *to behave* like that. ²¹I am sure that you heard the message about *Christ*, and because you are people who have a close relationship with him, you were taught {*others* taught you} the true way to live that *Jesus showed us*. ²²You were taught {*They* taught you} that you must put aside [MET] your evil nature; *that is, that you must not behave like you formerly did*. Your evil desires deceived you, making you want to do evil things and causing you to think that *doing that was good for you*, and that was destroying you *spiritually*. ²³Others taught you that instead, you must let *God's Spirit* change the way you think, ²⁴and that you must start being [MET] the new persons that God made you to become. That is, your *behavior* must be righteous and truly/genuinely devout.

²⁵Therefore, quit lying to one another. Instead, because we all belong to just one group of *believers*, speak truthfully to each other. ²⁶If you get angry, do not sin *as a result of* getting angry. Stop being angry before the end of the day [MTY], ²⁷and *by doing that*, do not allow the devil to make you do evil. ²⁸Those who have been stealing must not steal any longer. Instead, they should work hard to earn <their living/what they need> <by their own efforts/by what they do themselves> [MTY], in order that they may have *something* to give to those who are needy. ²⁹Do not use [MTY] foul language. Instead, say only things that are suitable/useful for helping people when they need help, things that will help *spiritually* the people that you talk to. ³⁰*God has given you his Spirit* <to confirm/to assure you> that some day *God will claim all you people whom Christ has redeemed* [MET], *just like people confirm that something belongs to them* by putting their seal on it. So do not cause God's Holy Spirit to be sad <by the way you talk/by the things that you say>. ³¹Do not be resentful at all towards others. Do not become angry in any way. Never shout abusively at others. Never <slander/say bad things about> others. Never <act maliciously/be mean> in any way. ³²Be kind to one another. Act mercifully toward each other. Forgive each other, just like God forgave you because of *what Christ has done*.

Ephesians 5:1-6

THEME: *Imitate God, do everything in a way that shows love, and do not let anyone persuade you to live immorally, because God will punish those who disobey him.*

5 ¹<Imitate/Behave like> God, because he loves you who are *as though you were* [SIM] his children. ²Do everything in a way that shows that you love *people*, just like Christ loved us and willingly died for us. He offered himself *to God as a sacrifice* that was very pleasing to God, *just like Jewish priests offered sweet-smelling animal sacrifices* to God [MET]. ³Do not commit any kind of immoral act [DOU], and do not desire more things than you need. Do not *act in such a way that others could even* <spread rumors/talk> about your acting in such ways, because it is not appropriate/fitting for God's people to do such things. ⁴Do not use obscene/shameful language when you talk to people. Do not talk foolishly. Do not use vulgar/indecent language, because it is not appropriate/fitting that God's people should talk like that. Instead, tell people how much you thank *God for all he does for you*. ⁵You can be sure of this: No person who is sexually immoral or who acts indecently/shamefully will be among those people whom God rules over [MET] *in heaven*. Neither will those who

desire more things than they need. Such people worship their possessions *instead of worshipping God*.⁶ Do not let anyone deceive you by suggesting that *God will really not punish people who commit such sins*, because God certainly will punish [MTY] those who habitually disobey him *by doing such things*.

Ephesians 5:7-21

THEME: *Live righteously, and expose the evil deeds that evil people do, because when you do that, those people who do those evil things will come to know the truth.*

⁷ So, do not commit the same kind of deeds that such people do,⁸ because formerly you *did not know God's truth* [MET], as those who are in darkness *do not know what is around them*. But now *it is as though* you are in the light [MET] *because you know God's truth* because of your relationship with the Lord *Jesus*. So do those things that those who know God's truth [MET] should do.⁹ Keep in mind that as light [MET] produces *things that are good, those who know God's truth should do those things* that are good, righteous, and honest.¹⁰ And *as you do that*, try *to find out/to discover* what pleases the Lord.¹¹ Do not do the worthless deeds that the people *who are in spiritual darkness/who do not know God's truth* [MET] do. Instead, let others know that those people's deeds are worthless.¹² It is shameful for God's people to even talk *among themselves about* those evil deeds that evil people do secretly and habitually.¹³ But when *God's people rebuke those evil people about their deeds*, *it will be clear/evident how evil their deeds really are, just like* everything exposed to the light becomes visible {as light [MET] reveals everything *that we cannot see in the darkness*}.¹⁴ *Just like something on which a light shines reflects that light* [MET], *whoever has learned God's truth reveals that truth to others*. That is why we believers say this:

You who are *not aware of your sins, become aware of them* [MET]!

It is as though you are sound asleep, so wake up!

Be like dead people who are becoming alive again!

Christ will *cause you to know God's truth, just like a light* [MET]

that shines *causes people to know what is in the darkness*.

¹⁵ So be very careful how you behave. Do not behave as foolish people do. Instead, behave as wise people do.¹⁶ Use your time carefully, because in these days [MTY] *people do* extremely evil *deeds*.¹⁷ Because of that, do not be foolish. Instead, understand what the Lord *Jesus* wants you to do, *and do it!*

¹⁸ Do not become drunk by drinking alcoholic drinks, since people are unable to control their behavior when they are drunk. Instead, let *God's Spirit* control your *behavior* at all times [MTY].¹⁹ Sing to each other *Psalms/songs with words from the Scriptures*, sing *other songs that the congregation knows*, and songs *that God's Spirit gives you*. Sing these Psalms and other songs sincerely to *praise* the Lord *Jesus*.²⁰ At all times thank God, who is our *heavenly Father*, for everything, because of what the Lord *Jesus Christ* [MTY] *has done for you*.²¹ *Humbly* submit yourselves to each other because you reverence Christ, *who is our example*.

Ephesians 5:22-6:9

THEME: *Instructions about how wives and husbands, children and parents, and slaves and masters should behave toward each other.*

²²⁻²³ Because husbands have authority over [MET] their wives, just as all of us believers form one group *under the authority of Christ*, you women should submit yourselves to *the authority of your husbands* just as you submit yourselves to the Lord *Jesus*. He is the one who saves all his people *from the guilt of their sins*.²⁴ Just like all believers submit themselves to *the authority of Christ*, the women must submit themselves completely to the *authority of their husbands*.

²⁵ Each of you husbands, love your wife as Christ loved all of *us who would become* believers, with the result that he willingly died for our sake,²⁶ in order that he might *set us apart for himself/cause us to belong to him*. That is, by *revealing his message to us*, he wanted to *remove the guilt of our sin, just like people remove dirt from something* by washing it [MET].²⁷ *Christ did that* in order that he might cause all of us believers to be a glorious group of people that belong to him, people that do not have any moral flaws/imperfections, but instead might be completely pure [DOU] when he gathers us *to his presence/to himself*.²⁸ In the same way, each man should love his wife as he loves his own body. Men who love their wives, *it is as though* they love themselves.²⁹⁻³⁰ This is shown by the fact that no one ever hated his own body. Instead, he feeds his own body and cares for it, just like Christ also cares for all us believers. We have become one group of believers that belongs to him [MET].³¹ *What someone has written in the Scriptures about people who marry is this*,

When a man and a woman marry, they should *permanently leave/no longer live with* their fathers and mothers. They should be joined *as husband and wife*, and the two of them shall become *as though they were one* [MET] person.

³² It is very difficult to understand the meaning of these things that God has now revealed to me, but *I am telling you that* those words *also* refer to *the relationship between* Christ and all those who belong to him.³³ However, as for you, each man must love his wife just as he loves himself, and each woman must respect her husband.

6¹ You children, because you *belong to/have a close relationship with* the Lord *Jesus*, obey your parents, because it is right *for you to do that*.² God commanded *in the Scriptures*, *Greatly respect your father and mother*.

That is the first law *that God* commanded in *which he also* promised something. *He promised,*

³ *If you do* that, you will prosper,
and you will live a long time on the earth.

⁴ You parents (OR, You fathers), do not treat your children so severely that they become angry. Instead, bring them up well by instructing them and by disciplining them in *the manner that* the Lord Jesus wants you to do.

⁵ You slaves, obey those who are *your masters* here on the earth. Obey them very respectfully and sincerely [DOU], just like you obey Christ. ⁶ Obey them, not only when they are watching [MTY] you, and not only to cause them to think highly/well of you. Instead, obey them as *though you were* [MET] slaves of Christ, *not slaves of your masters*. Do enthusiastically what God wants you to do. ⁷ Serve your masters zealously/wholeheartedly, as you would serve the Lord Jesus, not as you would serve ordinary people. ⁸ *Do this because* you know that *some day* the Lord Jesus will reward each person for whatever good *deeds* that person has done. He will reward people who are slaves and people who are not slaves.

⁹ You masters, just like your slaves *should serve you well*, you similarly must treat them well. Stop threatening to beat them if they do not do their work well. Do not forget that the one who is their Lord and your Lord is in heaven. *So he is the one who will say to you and your slaves whether he approves of what you and they have done*, and when he judges people, he does not act more favorably toward some than he acts toward others.

Ephesians 6:10-20

THEME: *As you always rely on the Lord to strengthen you, make use of every spiritual resource that God provides to resist the devil and all his powerful evil spirits.*

¹⁰ Finally, at all times rely/depend completely on the Lord Jesus to strengthen you *spiritually* by his own mighty power. ¹¹ *Just like a soldier* puts on all his <armor/things to help him fight> [MET], you should use every spiritual resource/help that God provides for you, in order that you may successfully resist the devil when he cleverly tries to oppose you. ¹² You must do this because the fighting that we *believers* do is not only against human beings [SYN]. Instead, we are also fighting against evil spirits who rule and have authority over all that is evil [MET] in the world. We are fighting against evil spirits who are in heavenly places (OR, everywhere). ¹³ Therefore, *just like a soldier* puts on all his <armor/things to help him fight> [MET], use well all the spiritual resources/helps that God provides for you. Do that in order that you may be able to resist successfully the devil and all his powerful evil spirits [MTY] every time they <attack you/tempt you to sin or cause something bad to happen to you>. *Do it also in order that* when you have done all that you can to resist them *when they attack you*, you will still be ready to resist them *when they attack you the next time*.

¹⁴ You must be ready to firmly *resist the devil and his evil spirits* [MET], *just like soldiers must be ready to resist the enemy*. Prepare for doing that by doing these things: To be strong spiritually, hold firmly to God's truth, just like soldiers prepare <to stand firm against/to firmly resist> their enemies by fastening their belts around their waists [MET]. Act righteously in order to protect yourself against demonic attacks, *just like soldiers* put on breastplates to protect their chests against his enemies' attacks [MET]. ¹⁵ Hold firmly the good message that gives us peace with God, *just like soldiers* put on their boots firmly [MET] <to stand firm against/to firmly resist> their enemies. ¹⁶ In addition, keep trusting firmly in the Lord. *That will enable you to protect yourselves from anything that Satan*, the evil one, may do to harm you spiritually, *just like soldiers* carry shields to protect themselves against the arrows that have flaming tips that their enemies shoot at them [MET]. ¹⁷ And rely/depend on the fact that God has saved you, in order to protect yourselves against demonic attacks, *just like soldiers* put on a helmet to protect their heads from attacks by their enemies [MET]. And be ready to use the weapon that God's Spirit has given you, which is the message of God, in order to fight against <demonic powers/Satan>, *just like soldiers* use their swords to fight against their enemies [MET]. ¹⁸ As you are doing that, keep praying to God at all times, and requesting him to do things for you and others; and let God's Spirit direct what you pray. For this purpose, always be spiritually alert/watchful, and <always be persistent in/never quit> praying for all God's people. ¹⁹ And specifically, pray for me. Pray that God will tell me what I should say [MTY] whenever I speak, in order that I may boldly tell others the good message about Christ. People did not know that message before, *but God has now revealed it to me*. ²⁰ I am <a representative of Christ/one who speaks on behalf of Christ> as I tell this message to others, and I am in prison [MTY] because of that. Pray that when I tell others about Christ, I may speak without being afraid, because that is how I ought to speak.

Ephesians 6:21-24

THEME: *I am sending Tychicus to tell you what is happening here and to encourage you. I pray that God will give you peace and love for each other, and that he will continue to act kindly toward you all.*

²¹ In order that you may know about what is happening to me and what I am doing, I am sending Tychicus to you with this letter. He will tell you everything that is happening here. He is a fellow believer whom we(*inc*) love very much, and he serves the Lord Jesus faithfully. ²² That is the reason that I am sending him to you; I want you to know <how my companions and I are/what is happening to my companions and me>, and I want him to encourage you [SYN].

²³ I pray that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will cause all of you fellow believers to have inner peace, and enable you to love each other and to continue trusting in Christ. ²⁴ I pray that God will continue to act kindly to you and to all others who love our Lord Jesus Christ and will never quit loving him.

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Christians at Philippi. We call this letter Philippians

Philippians 1:1-2

THEME: I, Paul, write this letter to all of you who are God's people at Philippi. May God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord bless you.

1 ¹ I, Paul, and Timothy, *who is with me*, are men who serve Christ Jesus. I *am writing this letter* to all of you who are pastors and deacons in Philippi city and to the rest of God's people *there who have a close relationship* with Christ Jesus. ² *We both* (OR, *I*) *pray that* God, *who is our Father*, and Jesus Christ, *who is our Lord*, *will continue to act kindly toward you and will continue to cause you to have inner peace.*

Philippians 1:3-8

THEME: I thank God and rejoice because you have been working together with me to make known the good message from when you first believed until now.

³ I thank my God whenever I think about you. ⁴ Every time [DOU] I *pray for you*, I joyfully pray [DOU] for all of you. ⁵ I *thank God and rejoice* because you have been *working together with me* in order to *make known* the good message about Christ. *You started doing that* when you first [MTY] *believed it, and you have continued doing it* until now. ⁶ I am completely confident that *God*, who has begun to perform in you what is good, (OR, that since *God* has begun to perform in you what is good, he) will continue to do that until he finishes doing it on the day Christ Jesus [MTY] *returns*. ⁷ During this time that I have been a prisoner [MTY] and during the times I *was previously able to* defend the good message about Christ and proved/confirmed *to others* that it is true, all of you have been sharing with me (OR, have helped me) in this work *that God kindly gave to me to do*. So indeed it is right that I feel joyful about you all, because you are very dear [IDM] to me. ⁸ God *can verify that* Christ Jesus causes me to *love and long for* all of you very much, *just like* Christ loves you.

Philippians 1:9-11

THEME: I pray that God will enable you to know how to love one another more and more appropriately and to completely understand how you should believe and act.

⁹ And what I *pray for you* is that *God will enable* you to truly know and discern how to love *one another* more and more in a proper way in every situation. ¹⁰ *And I pray that he will enable* you to completely understand *how you should believe and act*. I *pray this* in order that you might be *spiritually* pure and faultless (OR, completely faultless [DOU]) on the day that Christ *returns* [MTY], ¹¹ *and in order that* you might conduct your lives [IDM] completely righteously as a result of Jesus Christ *enabling you to do so*, in order that *people will honor* God and praise him (OR, *people will* praise God very much [DOU]).

Philippians 1:12-14

THEME: I want you to realize that as a result of my imprisonment many more people have heard the good message about Christ.

¹² My fellow believers, I want you to know that the *troubles* I have experienced *have not prevented me from proclaiming the good message to people*. *Instead, these things that I have experienced* have enabled even more people to hear the good message about Christ. ¹³ *Specifically*, all the military guards who are stationed *here in Rome* and many other [HYP] *people in this city* [HYP] now know that I am a prisoner [MTY] because I *proclaim the good news* about Christ. ¹⁴ Also, most of the believers *here now* proclaim the message from God more courageously and fearlessly *because they trust the Lord more firmly to help them*. They *trust the Lord more* because *they have seen how the Lord has helped me* while I have been a prisoner [MTY] *here*.

Philippians 1:15-18a

THEME: Even though some believers proclaim the message about Christ because they are antagonistic toward me, at least they are proclaiming Christ, and so I rejoice.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ Some people proclaim *the message about Christ as I do* because they are happy *with my work*. They proclaim *the message about Christ* because they love *me and because they know that God* has placed me *here* in order that I defend the message about Christ [CHI]. ¹⁷ Others proclaim *the message about Christ* because they envy *me* and oppose *me*. Those people want to exalt themselves *above me*. They *proclaim the message about Christ because they have wrong*

motives. They *wrongly* assume *that because they are causing many people to follow them, I will be jealous, and as a result, I will feel more miserable while I am a prisoner* [MTY] *here*.¹⁸ But *<it does not matter!/what does it matter?>* [RHQ] It does not matter whether *people proclaim the message about Christ* because they have wrong motives, or whether *people proclaim the message about Christ* because they have right motives. The important thing in either case is that *the message about Christ* is being proclaimed {people are proclaiming *the message about Christ*}. And because of that I rejoice!

Philippians 1:18b-26

THEME: *I will continue to rejoice because I know that I will remain completely victorious spiritually because I earnestly expect to boldly honor Christ whether I live or die.*

Furthermore, I will continue to rejoice,¹⁹ because I know that the outcome of these *troubles that I am experiencing* will be *that some day God will say that he approves of what I have done* (OR, that *the Roman authorities* will set me free). *This will happen* as a result of your praying for me, and as a *result of God's Spirit*, whom Jesus Christ gave me, helping me.

²⁰ I *know that this will happen* because I very confidently expect [DOU] that in no way I will be *reluctant to honor Christ*. Instead, just like I always *have done*, Christ will be greatly honored {I will continue now also to very boldly honor Christ} by means of all that I do [SYN, MTY], whether *by the way I live or by the way I die*.

²¹ As for me, I live *in order to honor Christ*. But if I die, it will be *better for me than if I continue to live, because then I will be completely united with him*.²² On the other hand, if I continue to live, that will enable me to continue to serve *Christ* effectively. As a result, I do not know whether I prefer *to live or to die*.²³ That is, I am not sure which of those two I *prefer*. I long to leave *this world* and *go to be with Christ*, because that will be very much *better for me*.²⁴ Nevertheless, it is more important that I remain alive *than that I go to be with Christ* because you still need *me to help you*.²⁵ Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain *alive* and that I will *go/come to be with you all*. As a *result*, you will believe *in Christ* more firmly, and as a *result of that*, you will rejoice.²⁶ *That is*, you will be able to rejoice very greatly because of Christ Jesus *bringing me to be with you again*.

Philippians 1:27-30

THEME: *Conduct yourselves just like you learned in the message about Christ, unitedly and fearlessly resisting those who oppose you and the gospel, since God is helping you in all your struggles.*

²⁷ Most importantly, as fellow *believers in Christ*, conduct yourselves just like *you learned you should do when you heard the message about Christ*. Do that in order that whether I come and see you, or whether *I am away from you* and people tell me about you, *what I hear or see will make me happy*. They will tell me that you are unitedly and cooperatively resisting *those who oppose the message about Christ* (OR, *oppose you*). I *will know* that you are not allowing others to influence you to believe a message that is different from the good message *about Christ*.²⁸ And I *will know* that you are not at all frightened by {afraid of} the people who oppose you. This will show/prove to those people that *God will destroy them*, but this will show/prove to you that *God will save you eternally*. It is God who is doing *all this*.²⁹ Remember that he has not only kindly enabled you to believe in Christ, *he has also kindly allowed you to suffer for the sake of Christ*.³⁰ As a *result*, you are *having to resist those who oppose the good message*, just like you saw that I *had to resist such people there in Philippi*, and just like you hear that I *still have to resist such people here now*.

Philippians 2:1-4

THEME: *Since Christ loves and encourages us and the Holy Spirit fellowships with us, make me completely happy by agreeing with one another, loving one another, and humbly serving one another.*

2¹ Since Christ encourages us, since he loves us and comforts us, since God's Spirit fellowships with *us*, and since *Christ* is very merciful [DOU] to us,² make me completely happy *by doing the following things*: Agree with one another, love one another, be closely united with one another, and *live harmoniously with one another* [DOU].³ Never try to selfishly make yourselves more important than *others* nor boast *about what you are doing*. Instead, be humble, and *in particular*, honor one another more than you honor yourselves.⁴ Each one of you should not *only* be concerned about your own affairs. Instead, each of you should also be concerned *<that you help/about the needs of>* one another.

Philippians 2:5-11

THEME: *You should think just like Christ Jesus thought. He willingly gave up his divine privileges and humbled himself, willingly obeying God although it meant having the disgrace of dying on a cross. As a result, God exalted him to the highest position, to be acknowledged by the entire universe as the supreme Lord.*

⁵ You should think/act just like Christ Jesus *thought/acted*.⁶ Although he has the same nature as God has, he did not insist on keeping all the privileges of being equal with God.⁷ Instead, he *willingly* gave up divine privileges. *Specifically*, he became a human being and took the attitude of a servant. When he had become a human being,⁸ he humbled himself *even more*. *Specifically*, he obeyed God even to the extent of *being willing to die*. *He was even willing to be nailed to a cross, to die as though he was a criminal*.⁹ As a result, God raised him to a *rank that is above every other rank*.¹⁰ *God did*

that in order that every being [SYN] in heaven and on earth and under the earth should worship [MTY] Jesus, ¹¹ and in order that every person [SYN] should declare that Jesus Christ is Lord. As a result of everyone doing that, they will honor God, his Father.

Philippians 2:12-13

THEME: *Since you have always obeyed God, continue to try to do those things which are appropriate for people whom God has saved, and he will enable you to do so.*

¹² My dear friends, as you consider this, since you have always obeyed God, each of you should very reverentially [DOU] try to do those things that are proper for people whom God has saved. You should do those things not only when I am with you. Instead, you should try even more to do them now when I am not with you. ¹³ You are able to do these things, since God himself causes you to desire to do what he wants you to do, and he also enables you to do what he wants you to do.

Philippians 2:14-16

THEME: *Obey God and your leaders always, and never complain against them or argue with them, in order that you may be perfect children of God, witnessing by life and word to the ungodly people among whom you live.*

¹⁴ Do everything God or your leaders ask you to do. Never complain about what they want you to do or argue with them. ¹⁵ Behave like that in order that you may be completely faultless [DOU] and may be perfect children of God [DOU] while you live in the midst of people who are wicked and do very wicked things [DOU]. As you live among them, show them clearly [MET] the way they ought to behave, just like the sun, moon, and stars show an earthly road clearly to us [SIM]. ¹⁶ Tell them the message about how to have eternal life. I ask that you do that in order that on the day Christ returns I may be able to rejoice [MTY], that I did not labor [DOU] so hard among you in vain.

Philippians 2:17-18

THEME: *Because I and all of you dedicate ourselves together to do God's will, even if I am to be executed, I will rejoice, and you should also rejoice.*

¹⁷ Perhaps the Roman authorities will execute me, and my blood will pour out [MET] as the wine pours out when the priest offers it to God [MET]. For your part, you believe in Christ firmly. As a result, you have given yourselves completely to God in order that you might do what he wills [MET], just like a priest offers a sacrifice completely to God [MET]. Because I dedicate myself wholly to God together with you, even if they are about to execute me, I will greatly rejoice [DOU], because I am giving myself wholly to God, and because you all are giving yourselves wholly to God. ¹⁸ Similarly, you too should rejoice because you are giving yourselves wholly to God, and you should rejoice because I am giving myself wholly to God.

Philippians 2:19-24

THEME: *I confidently expect that the Lord Jesus will enable me to send Timothy to you soon. He genuinely cares for your welfare, not his own interests. I am confident that the Lord will enable me also to come soon.*

¹⁹ My relationship with the Lord Jesus leads me to confidently expect that he will enable me to send Timothy to you soon, in order that his telling you the news about me will encourage you. But I also expect that his returning to me and telling me the news about you will encourage me. ²⁰ Keep in mind that I have no one else like him who genuinely cares for you. ²¹ All the others whom I have considered that I might send to you are concerned only about their own matters. They are not concerned about what Jesus Christ considers important. ²² But you know that Timothy has proved that he serves the Lord and others faithfully. You know that he has served the Lord closely together with me in proclaiming to people the message about Christ as though he were [SIM] my son and I were his own father. ²³ So then he is the one I confidently expect to send to you as soon as I know what will happen to me. ²⁴ And I am confident that I will soon be released {the authorities will soon release me} so that the Lord will enable me also to come/go to you soon.

Philippians 2:25-30

THEME: *Since Epaphroditus longs to see you and is distressed, I am sending him back to you. So welcome him very joyfully. Since he nearly died while serving me on your behalf, honor him and all people like him.*

²⁵ I have concluded that it is really necessary that I send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a fellow believer and my fellow worker, and he endures difficulties together with me [MET], just like soldiers endure difficulties together. You sent him to me in order that he might help me when I was needy [EUP]. ²⁶ But I have concluded that I must send him back to you because he has been longing to see you all. Furthermore, he has been very distressed because he knows that you heard that he had become sick. ²⁷ Indeed, he was so sick that he almost died. However, he did not die. Instead, God pitied him and he also pitied me, and as a result he healed him. God pitied me because he did not want me to be even more sorrowful than I already was. ²⁸ So, I am sending him back to you as quickly as possible in order that you may rejoice when you see him again and in order that I may be less sorrowful than I was. ²⁹⁻³⁰ Welcome him very joyfully just like believers in our Lord Jesus should welcome one another. While he was working for Christ, he was helping me in place of you because

you were far away. He knew that he might die as a result of helping me, and *truly* he nearly did die. So honor *him*, and honor all those who are like him.

Philippians 3:1

THEME: *As for the other matters, continue to rejoice and know that it is not tiresome for me and it is safe for you to mention them again.*

3 ¹ Now there are other things that I want to write about. My fellow believers, continue to rejoice because you belong to the Lord. *Though* I will now write to you about those same matters that I mentioned to you before, this is not tiresome for me, and it will protect you from those who would harm you spiritually.

Philippians 3:2-4a

THEME: *Beware of those unholy people who will harm you spiritually by insisting that you must be circumcised in order to become God's people.*

² Beware of those people who are dangerous [MET] like wild dogs. They are dangerous evildoers [DOU]. Beware of them since they are like people who cut other people's bodies [MET]. They will harm you spiritually by insisting that you must let someone circumcise you in order for you to become God's people [MTY, MET]. ³ Those people think that they are God's people because someone has circumcised them. But **we**, not they, are truly God's people [MET], whether or not someone has circumcised us. God's Spirit enables us to [MTY] worship God; we praise Christ Jesus because he has enabled us to become the people of God. We do not believe that God will consider/make us his people as a result of what someone has done to our bodies [MTY, SYN]. ⁴ We do not trust in those rituals to make us acceptable to God, although I could very well do that if it would be useful for me.

Philippians 3:4b-6

THEME: *Since I was circumcised properly and have a purely Hebrew ancestry, and since I kept the Jewish laws blamelessly, I could rely upon what I have done and who I am better than anyone else could, if it were beneficial for my salvation.*

In fact, if I could benefit from it for my salvation, I could rely upon what I have done and who I am [MTY, SYN] more than anyone else could. *I will tell you why.* ⁵ I was circumcised {Someone circumcised me} when I was one week old. I am from the people of Israel. I am from the tribe of Benjamin. I am completely Hebrew in every way. *While I was* a member of the Pharisee sect, I strictly obeyed the laws that God gave Moses. ⁶ I was so zealous to make people obey those laws that I caused the people who believe in Christ to suffer because I thought they were trying to abolish those laws. *Indeed,* as far as my obeying those laws is concerned, no one could have accused me by saying that I had disobeyed any of those laws.

Philippians 3:7-11

THEME: *I now consider all these advantages that I once supposed would help me to be worthless, and I consider everything else as well to be worthless, because I want to know Christ, to be united with him, and to be made righteous through trusting in Christ alone.*

⁷ Nevertheless, all such things as those, which I used to consider to be useful to me, those very things I now consider worthless, because I want to know Christ (OR, in order that I may know Christ). ⁸ More than that, I consider all things to be worthless, compared to how great it is to know Christ Jesus my Lord. Because I want to know him better (OR, in order that I may know him better), I have rejected all things as worthless. I consider them as useless as [MET] rubbish, in order that I may have a close relationship with Christ [MET], ⁹ and in order that I may completely belong to him. It was not as a result of my obeying the laws he gave Moses that God erased the record of my sins. Instead, it is because I have trusted in Christ that God has declared the guilt for my sins to be ended and he enables me to act righteously. *It is God himself who* has erased the record of my sins, and he enables me to act righteously, *only* because I have trusted in Christ. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ better and better. Particularly, I want to continually experience his working powerfully in <me/my life>, just like God worked powerfully when he caused Christ to become alive after he died. I also want to be continually willing to suffer in order that I may obey God, just like Christ suffered in order that he might obey God. I also want to be completely willing to die for Christ, even as he died for me, ¹¹ because I expect that, as a result of God's goodness, he will cause me to live again after I have died.

Philippians 3:12-16

THEME: *Since you desire to be perfected and since you have my example of not considering that I am already perfect, but of constantly striving to become more and more like Christ, follow my example.*

¹² I do not claim that I have already become completely like Christ Jesus; that is, I have not already become all that God intends me to be [DOU]. But I earnestly try to become more and more like Christ, because he chose me in order that I might become like him. ¹³ My fellow believers, I certainly do not consider that I have already become completely like Christ. But I am like a runner. A runner does not look backward [MET]. Instead, he leans/stretch forward as he runs

straight toward the goal *in order that he might win the race and get the prize. Similarly*, I do not think about what I have already done. ¹⁴ Instead, I concentrate only on *continuing to become more and more like Christ right up to the end of my life* [MET]. As a result, because of my relationship with Christ Jesus, God will call/summon me to receive a reward from him *in heaven*. ¹⁵ So, all of us who are *spiritually* mature should think/act this *same way*. If any of you do not think this same way regarding what I *have written here*, God will reveal this to you. ¹⁶ What is important is that we must conduct our lives according to what *God has already revealed to us*.

Philippians 3:17-21

THEME: *Imitate me and those who live as I do. Remember that there are many people who are bad examples, as shown by their lustful behavior, wanting to do what their bodies desire. But as for us, Christ will transform our weak bodies to be like his glorious heavenly body.*

¹⁷ My fellow believers, *all of you* should unitedly imitate me, and observe those people who act as I do, *in order that you may imitate them also*. ¹⁸ *Keep in mind that there are many people who say that they believe in Christ, but who act in such a way that shows that they are opposed to the teaching about Christ dying on the cross* [MTY]. I have told you about those people many times *before*, and now I am sad, even crying, as I tell you *about them again*. ¹⁹ God will severely punish them. The things their bodies desire [MTY] have become *like gods* to them [MET]. They are proud of the things they should be ashamed of. They think only about what unbelievers [MTY] think about. ²⁰ *But remember that we are citizens of heaven. And we eagerly wait for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to return from there.* ²¹ By the power that enables him to put everything under his own control, he will change our weak bodies to become like his glorious body.

Philippians 4:1

THEME: *On the basis of all that I have told you, continue to believe firmly in the Lord Jesus Christ according to what I have just taught you, and act accordingly.*

4 ¹ My fellow believers, I love you, and I long for you. You make me happy [MTY], and I am <proud of/pleased with> you. Dear friends, on the basis of *all that I have told you*, continue to believe firmly in the Lord according to what I have just taught you.

Philippians 4:2-3

THEME: *I urge Euodia and Syntyche to be reconciled with each other; help them in this since they have both proclaimed the good news faithfully together with me and my other fellow workers.*

² I urge *you(sg)*, Euodia, and I urge *you(sg)*, Syntyche, to again have a peaceful relationship with each other, *because you both have a relationship with the Lord*. ³ And, my faithful comrade/partner^a, I request that you(*sg*) help them *to again have a peaceful relationship with each other*, because they have *faithfully proclaimed* the message *about Christ* together with me, *even though many people* have opposed us(*exc*). They have faithfully proclaimed that message together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book *in which God has written the names of all those people who will live forever*.

Philippians 4:4-7

THEME: *The Lord is near. Always rejoice, be gentle to everyone. Do not worry about anything, but pray to God instead. As a result, God will grant you profound peace.*

⁴ *Because you have a relationship with the Lord, always rejoice! I say again, rejoice!* ⁵ *Act in such a way that everyone can know that you are gentle. The Lord is near (OR, coming soon).* ⁶ Do not worry about anything. Instead, in every situation, pray *to God*, tell him what you need, and ask him *to help you* [DOU]. Also thank *him for what he does for you*. ⁷ As a result, God will enable you not to worry *about anything* [MTY] (OR, God will protect your minds *in every way*) [PRS]. *That is*, he will cause you to have *inner peace because you have a relationship with Christ Jesus*. You will not be able to understand [PRS] *how you can be so peaceful in such difficult circumstances!*

Philippians 4:8-9

THEME: *Continually think about everything that is good and praiseworthy. Continually practice whatever you have learned from me. As a result, God will be with you and give you inner peace.*

⁸ My fellow believers, there is one more thing I *want you to do*. Whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect, whatever is right, whatever is morally pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is admirable, whatever is good, whatever *deserves* praise, those are the things that you should continually think about. ⁹ Those things that I have taught you and that you have

^a We do not know who Paul was addressing. However, it appears that Paul expected a certain person would know how to facilitate the reconciliation of these two women.

received from me, those things that you have heard me say and that you have seen me do, those are the things that you yourselves should continually do. As a result of *your doing those things*, God, the one who causes us to have inner peace, will <be with/bless> you.

Philippians 4:10-14

THEME: *I rejoice greatly because you have once again demonstrated your concern for me by giving to meet my needs, though it is true that Christ enables me to be content in every situation.*

¹⁰ I rejoice greatly and thank the Lord because now, after some time, by sending money to me you have once again shown that you are concerned about me [EUP]. Indeed, you were concerned about me *all the time*, but you had no opportunity to show that you were concerned about me. ¹¹ I am saying this not because I am concerned that I lack things that I need. In fact, I have learned to be content in whatever situation I am. ¹² Specifically, I know how to be content when I do not have what I need, and I know how to be content when I have plenty. I have learned how to be content in any and every situation [DOU]. Specifically, I have learned how to be content when I have enough to eat, and I have learned how to be content when I do not have enough to eat. I have learned how to be content when I have plenty [DOU] of what I need, and I have learned how to be content when I lack things. ¹³ I am able <to cope with/to handle> every situation because Christ gives me the strength to do that. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, you did very well in that you helped me (OR, gave me money) [EUP] while I have been suffering hardship.

Philippians 4:15-17

THEME: *You Philippians know that in the early days of preaching the good news in your region you were the only congregation that sent me money. I do not say this because I desire your gifts, but I desire that God would abundantly bless you for aiding me.*

¹⁵ My friends there at Philippi, you yourselves know that during the time I first proclaimed the message about Christ to you, when I left there to go to Macedonia province, you were the only group of believers [LIT] who sent me gifts [EUP] in order that I might proclaim that message to others just like I did for you. ¹⁶ Even when I was in Thessalonica city, you sent money [EUP] to me two different times [IDM] in order to supply what I needed. ¹⁷ I say this, not because I desire that you give me money now. Instead, I desire that God will abundantly bless [MET] you as a result of your helping me.

Philippians 4:18-20

THEME: *I have received your very generous gift; God is very pleased with this gift, and he will abundantly supply your every need also. Let us praise him forever.*

¹⁸ I have received a very generous gift [EUP] from you, and as a result, I have plenty. I have an abundant supply of what I need because I have received from Epaphroditus the money [EUP] that you sent to me. God considers that your gift is very acceptable, and he is very pleased with it. Your gift is like a nice-smelling sacrifice [MET]. ¹⁹ Moreover, God, whom I serve, has an unlimited supply of everything that we(inc) need. And as a result, because of your relationship with Christ Jesus, he will completely supply everything that you need. ²⁰ So, praise God our Father forever and ever! Amen!

Philippians 4:21-22

THEME: *All of God's people here, including those who serve God with me and those who work at the emperor's palace, join me in greeting each one of God's people there.*

²¹ Greet for me/us(exc) all of God's people there, that is, all those who have a relationship with Christ Jesus. The fellow believers who serve God together with me here send their greetings to you (OR, say they are thinking fondly of you). ²² All of God's people here send their greetings to you. Especially the fellow believers who work in the palace of the emperor send their greetings to you.

Philippians 4:23

THEME: *May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you.*

²³ My desire is that our Lord Jesus Christ will continue to act kindly toward you all [SYN].

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Christians at Colossae. We call this letter Colossians

Colossians 1:1-2

THEME: I, Paul, am sending this letter to you, who are God's people in Colossae. We pray that God will bless you.

1 ¹ I, Paul, am writing this letter to you, and our fellow believer Timothy is with me. I am an apostle who represents Christ Jesus, because that is what God wanted. ² I am sending this letter to you who are in Colossae city, and who are God's people, and our faithful fellow believers who have a close relationship with Christ. We pray that God our Father^a will be acting kindly towards you, and that he will cause you to have inner peace.

Colossians 1:3-8

THEME: We thank God for you very often that you believe in Christ Jesus and that you love all God's people.

³ Very often [HYP] we thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, while we are praying for you, ⁴ because we have heard that you believe in Christ Jesus, and that you love all God's people. ⁵ You do that because you confidently expect to receive that which God is <reserving/keeping safe> for you in heaven, which you heard about previously when you heard the true message, that is, the message about Christ. ⁶ People proclaimed it [PRS] to you, just like people have proclaimed it in many different countries [HYP, IDM]. The true message is changing more and more people's lives, just like it changed your lives because you heard it and you truly experienced that God acts kindly towards us in ways we do not deserve. ⁷ That is just what Epaphras taught you would happen. We love Epaphras. He serves Christ together with us and works for Christ faithfully for your benefit. ⁸ He told us that you love all God's people, just like God's Spirit has enabled you to (OR, spiritually).

Colossians 1:9-12

THEME: We have also been praying very often to God for you. We pray that you will know truly all that he wants you to do, in order that you will conduct yourselves as the Lord's people should.

⁹ Because of what we heard about you, we have also been praying [LIT] very often to God for you [HYP], ever since we heard this report about you. We pray that you will know truly all that God wants you to do; that is, that you will become very wise, and that you will understand spiritual matters well. ¹⁰ We have been praying that in order that you will conduct yourselves as the Lord's people should conduct themselves, in order that you will please the Lord in every way. Specifically, we have been praying that in order that you will be doing every sort of good deed [IDM] and in order that you will be getting to know God truly, more and more. ¹¹ And we pray that God will greatly strengthen you spiritually to the extent of the mighty power that he has shown to people, in order that you will always be steadfast and patient when you experience difficulties, while at the same time you will be rejoicing. ¹² And we pray that you will be thanking God our Father, because he has qualified you/us so that you/we are also worthy to receive the things that he will give to his people in heaven [SYN].

Colossians 1:13-20

THEME: God our Father has caused you to be ruled by his Son, who existed before and ranks above everything that has been created.

¹³ God our Father rescued us spiritually so that the evil one no longer rules us [MET, MTY], and he transferred us spiritually so that his Son, whom he loves, rules us. ¹⁴ That is, because of our relationship with his Son (OR, because of what his Son did), God has redeemed/bought us; in particular, he has forgiven our sins. ¹⁵ **God's Son reveals perfectly what God, his Father, is like**, whom no one can see. God's Son existed before and ranks above everything that God has created. ¹⁶ When God created everything that is on the earth, he did it by having his Son do it. He created everything that people can see, and also everything which is in heaven that people cannot see. In particular, his Son created all ranks of important spirit beings. And he ranks above everything, because God created everything by the work of his Son, and because by him all things were created {because God created everything} in order that everything might praise his Son, ¹⁷ and because it is his Son who existed before anything else existed, and because God sustains everything by what his Son does. ¹⁸ And God's Son ranks above everything, because it is he who rules over his people [MET] as a person's head controls his physical body, because he causes them to live spiritually. His Son is the first one who rose from among those

^a Some Greek manuscripts add, "and our Lord Jesus Christ".

who have died, in order that he should become more important than anything and everyone. ¹⁹ *He reveals perfectly what God his Father is like*, because it is in his Son that his Father chose that he himself would dwell completely. ²⁰ *God our Father caused his Son to rule us*, because he decided to reconcile to himself everything that is on earth and that is in heaven by what his Son did, in order that everything might honor his Son; that is, God our Father decided to reconcile everything to himself as a result of his Son's blood *flowing when he died* on the cross.

An alternative arrangement of the sentences of Colossians 1:13-19

The chiasitic material is rearranged below so that the directly related propositional clusters are joined together.

¹³ God our Father rescued us *spiritually* so that we are no longer ruled by the evil one, and God our Father transferred us *spiritually* so that we are ruled by his Son whom he loves. ^{14a} That is, by means of what his Son did, we have been redeemed by God, our Father. ^{14b} In particular, our sins have been forgiven by God, our Father. ²⁰ God, our Father, has done this because he decided to reconcile to himself, by means of his Son, everything that is on earth and that is in heaven, in order that his Son might be honored; that is, God, our Father decided to reconcile everything to himself by means of God's Son's blood *flowing out when he died* on the cross. ^{15b} God cannot be seen by anyone, ^{15a} **but his Son reveals perfectly what God—his Father—is like**, ^{19a} because it is in his Son that the Father chose ^{19b} that he himself would dwell completely. ^{15c} God's Son ranks above everything ^{15d} that has been created, ¹⁶ because it was by means of God's Son that God created everything that is on the earth and that can be seen by people, and also everything that is in heaven and that cannot be seen by people. In particular, all types of important spirit beings were created by means of him, since everything has been created by God by means of God's Son. And his Son ranks above everything, because everything has been created by God, in order that God's Son might be honored by everything, ¹⁷ and because it is he who existed before anything else existed, and since everything is sustained by God by means of God's Son. ¹⁸ And God's Son ranks above everything because it is he who *rules over all believers, just like a person's head controls his physical body, because he causes all believers to live spiritually*. His Son is the first one who rose from among those who have died, in order that he should become more important than everything and everyone.

Colossians 1:21-23

THEME: *As for you, God our Father has now reconciled you to himself.*

²¹ As for you, *although* formerly God considered you his enemies (OR, *God considered you as alienated from him*) and *although* you were formerly hostile to God because you thought evil thoughts and because you did evil deeds, ²² nevertheless, God our Father has now reconciled you to himself. *He did that* as a result of his Son dying physically. He did it in order that you should be completely holy when he brings you into his presence. ²³ But he wants you to continue [DOU] to believe the message about Christ; specifically, he wants you to continue to be stable/steadfast and to continue to confidently expect to receive that which you heard about when you heard that message. That message has been proclaimed {They have proclaimed that message} to people in very many places [HYP]; and I, Paul, have also become one who tells it to people.

Colossians 1:24-29

THEME: *I am completing what Christ appointed me to do, that I should suffer physically for the benefit of the church. And I proclaim the previously unrevealed message about Christ to every class of persons.*

²⁴ At the present time I am rejoicing that I am suffering for your benefit; that is, I am completing what Christ *decided* that I should suffer physically for the benefit of all believers, *who are as dear to him* as his own body. ²⁵ I myself became one who serves God's people, because I was appointed {God appointed me} to be responsible to *help* you *who are non-Jews*. I became one who serves God's people in order that I should make known to you non-Jews the whole message from/about God. ²⁶ *We did not know this message previously; that is, God concealed it from the people who lived in all the previous ages, but he has now revealed it to his people.* ²⁷ That is, God decided to reveal to them this message, which declares that he will greatly bless the non-Jews. Specifically, this message declares that Christ, *by his Spirit*, will live in you who are non-Jews, with the result that you confidently expect that you will share in God's glory. ²⁸ We proclaim about Christ to every class of persons; specifically, we warn them, and specifically, we teach everyone very wisely. We do this in order that every person who <has a close relationship with/is united to> Christ may be <all that God wants them to be/perfect> when we present them to Christ. ²⁹ In order that I might *achieve/accomplish this*, I am also working hard; that is, I am exerting myself as a result of Christ's empowering me very greatly.

Colossians 2:1-5

THEME: *I am exerting myself very greatly on your behalf in order that you might truly know the message about Christ, in order that no one might delude you.*

2 ¹ In particular, I want you to realize that I am <exerting myself very greatly/working very hard> on your behalf, on behalf of those who are in Laodicea city, and on behalf of all those others who have not seen me personally. ² I am doing this in order that they and you [SYN] might be strengthened *spiritually* as you are united in loving *one another*. And I am doing this in order that they and you might fully and thoroughly [DOU] understand the message that God has now revealed; that is, in order that they and you might truly know the message from God our Father and about Christ, ³ who alone is able to cause them and you to understand thoroughly [DOU] *this very important message*. ⁴ I am telling you this in order that no one may deceive you by means of arguing persuasively; ⁵ because, even though I am absent from you physically, I am very concerned about you. At the same time, I am rejoicing because I know that you are united *with each other* and that you believe firmly in Christ.

Colossians 2:6-7

THEME: *Conduct yourselves as those who are united to such a one as Christ Jesus our Lord should conduct themselves.*

⁶ In a way that is <consistent/in harmony> with *the message that you received* about Christ Jesus, who is our Lord, conduct yourselves as you should, since you have a close relationship with such a one as he is. ⁷ Specifically, continue believing and practicing [MET, DOU] what you were first taught about Christ. Continue to do this more and more; continue to be sure about all the true teaching, just like *Epaphras* taught it to you. And continue thanking *God, our Father*, very much *for all that he has done for you*.

Colossians 2:8-15

THEME: *Make sure that no one makes you become his disciples by teaching you a false religious philosophy, since you are spiritually complete because you are united to Christ.*

⁸ Make sure that no one forces you(*pl*) to become his disciples [MET] by his teaching you a religious philosophy/doctrine that is valueless and false. It is false because it teaches what mere human beings think, because it teaches people elementary regulations/rules *that are concerned merely with what is external/physical*, and because it teaches what is contrary to *the true teaching about Christ*. ⁹ *Make sure of this*, because it is in Christ's body that God lives completely. ¹⁰ And *make sure of it* because you are spiritually complete because you have a close relationship with Christ, who rules over every being that rules. ¹¹ Specifically, because of your close relationship with him, it is as though [MET] you were circumcised {Christ circumcised you} *spiritually*. This does not mean that someone circumcised you physically [MTY], but it means that Christ completely removed your entire self-directed nature. ¹² And specifically, when you were baptized, *it was as though* [MET] you *had died and* were buried with Christ, and *it was as though* [MET] God caused you to live again with Christ as a result of your believing that God acted powerfully, specifically, by your believing that God raised Christ from among dead people. ¹³ And specifically, you *who are non-Jews*, because of your sins, you were *spiritually* dead *before you trusted in Christ*. You were uncircumcised *spiritually*; that is, your self-directed nature controlled you. Nevertheless, it was you whom God caused to become alive *spiritually* [MET] with Christ. And specifically, God forgave us all our sins. ¹⁴ *It is just as though* he canceled the document/paper that stated <*the charges against us/the sins that we had committed*> for which *God will punish us*. And *it was just as though* [MET] it was that document/paper that he removed by nailing it to the cross *when they nailed Christ on the cross*. ¹⁵ And specifically, God defeated the *evil* spirit beings that rule, and he demonstrated/showed that publicly; that is, he triumphed over them as a result of what *Christ did*.

Colossians 2:16-19

THEME: *Disregard those who condemn you because you do not obey certain regulations and because you do not worship God as they insist that you should.*

¹⁶ So disregard anyone who says that God will punish you because you eat *certain foods* and because you drink *certain drinks* or because you do not *celebrate* special *yearly* festivals or celebrate the time when the new moon *appears* or weekly <*Sabbaths/Jewish days of rest*>. ¹⁷ *Disregard such people* because those *regulations/rules about food and drink and festivals* are *only* like a shadow [MET] *that is cast by something that is approaching; that is, they merely represent* the real spiritual blessings that Christ *has given to you*. ¹⁸ Disregard those who say that God will punish you because you do not *worship God in the way that they say that you should*; that is, they insist that you should humiliate yourselves and that you should worship the angels. *Disregard such people* since they base their authority on things that they have never seen, and since they are proud without reason because their self-directed nature *controls* what they think, ¹⁹ and since they do not teach the true teaching about Christ [MET]. *Christ is the one who causes all of his people to develop/grow spiritually as God plans that they should develop/grow, just like* [MET] a person's head directs how his body grows, as it is held together by its joints and ligaments.

Colossians 2:20-23

THEME: *Do not submit to elementary regulations, which are concerned merely with what is external.*

²⁰ *It is as though* [MET] you died with Christ. So you no longer have to obey elementary regulations/rules that are concerned merely with what is external/physical, just like a dead person no longer has to do anything. So, do not submit to regulations/rules ²¹ such as 'Do not handle *certain things*,' 'Do not taste *certain things*,' 'Do not touch *certain things*,' as if you still had to obey such regulations/rules. ²² All those things are intended to cease to exist when we use them. *And do not submit to such regulations/rules*, because they are what mere human teachers command and teach. ²³ *Do not obey such regulations/rules* because they only cause people to do what their self-directed nature wants to do. *Those regulations* seem to be wise because they *urge people to* worship in ways that mere human teachers have decided are valid. *They urge* that *people* should humiliate themselves, and that *people* should treat their bodies harshly. But those regulations/rules do not help *people* at all to not do the sinful things that their self-directed nature wants to do.

Colossians 3:1-4

THEME: *Be constantly wanting what is associated with heaven.*

3 ¹ You now are alive *spiritually*, and *it is as though you were raised* {*God caused you to become alive*} when he caused Christ to become alive again. So be constantly wanting what is associated with heaven [MTY], where Christ is. There God has given him supreme authority and the highest honor. ² Be constantly wanting the blessings that God has prepared for you in heaven [MTY]. Do not be constantly wanting *to do the evil deeds that people on earth do* [MTY], ³ because you have *ceased to behave as you formerly did*. *You are like people who have died*. You now live *spiritually* together with Christ in *the presence of God*; and *people* cannot see that. ⁴ When Christ, who causes you to live *spiritually*, is publicly revealed, then God will also reveal you publicly together with Christ, *and you together with Christ will be glorious*.

Colossians 3:5-11

THEME: *Do not do what is evil.*

⁵ *Get rid of your evil practices/deeds* [MET, MTY] *as though they were enemies whom you were killing* (OR, *Get rid of doing evil* [MET, MTY], like dead people do not do what is evil). Specifically, do not practice sexual immorality. Do not commit unnatural sexual acts. Do not desire to act like that, and do not desire *to do anything that is evil*. Do not desire to have more things than you need, because, if you do that, you are <worshipping material things instead of worshipping God/making material things to become your god>. ⁶ *Do not behave like that* since God will punish [MTY] those who disobey him, because they act like that. ⁷ You also formerly behaved like that when you were disobeying God. ⁸ Now, however, as for you, do not do any of these evil deeds: Do not get angry in any way [DOU]. Do not act maliciously. Do not <slander/talk evil about> people. Do not talk abusively to people. ⁹ Do not lie to one another. Do not do those things, because you have <disposed of/stopped obeying> your former evil nature and stopped doing what you did when you had that former *evil* nature, ¹⁰ and because you have received a new nature. God is causing your new nature to become more and more like his own nature. He created your new nature in order that *you might get to know God* truly. ¹¹ As a result of that, it is not *important whether anyone is a non-Jew or a Jew, or whether anyone is circumcised or not, or whether anyone is a foreigner, or even uncivilized, or whether anyone is a slave or not a slave*. But *what is important is Christ*, who is supremely important in every way.

Colossians 3:12-14

THEME: *Do what is good; in particular, love one another.*

¹² Because God has chosen you and reserved you to be his people, and because *God* loves you, be compassionate to one another. Be kind to one another. Be humble. Be meek (OR, be considerate toward one another), be patient with one another, ¹³ and tolerate one another. Forgive one another, if one of you has a grudge/complaint against another. Just like the Lord *Jesus freely/willingly* forgave you, you too *must freely/willingly forgive one another*. ¹⁴ And what is more important than all of these is that you love one another, because by doing that you will be perfectly united together.

Colossians 3:15-16

THEME: *Continue to be at peace with one another, be constantly thanking God, and continue getting to know thoroughly the message about Christ.*

¹⁵ Because God chose you to live peacefully *with one another* in your local congregations, let that peace which Christ gives control your <inner beings/hearts>, and be constantly thanking God. ¹⁶ And continue to let the message about Christ govern/direct all you think and do, as you very wisely teach and warn one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (OR, songs that God's Spirit *gives you*), while you sincerely and thankfully sing to God.

Colossians 3:17

THEME: Do everything in the manner that those who are the people of the Lord Jesus should do.

¹⁷ Whatever you say, and whatever you do, do all of this in the manner that those who are representatives [MTY] of the Lord Jesus *should do*, while you constantly thank God, our Father, as you ask the Lord Jesus to take your prayers to God.

Colossians 3:18-19

THEME: Wives, be subject to your husbands; husbands, love your wives.

¹⁸ You women, be subject to your husbands, since that is what you should do because you have a close relationship with the Lord *Jesus*. ¹⁹ You men, love your wives; in particular, do not be harsh with them.

Colossians 3:20-21

THEME: Children, obey your parents in every circumstance; parents, do not over-correct your children.

²⁰ You children, obey your parents in every circumstance, because the Lord *God* is pleased when you do that. ²¹ You parents (OR, you fathers), do not correct your children more than you need to, in order that they do not become discouraged.

Colossians 3:22-4:1

THEME: Slaves, obey your masters in every circumstance sincerely and wholeheartedly; masters, provide for your slaves justly and fairly.

²² You slaves, obey your earthly masters in every circumstance. Do not obey your masters only when they are watching [MTY] you, like those who *merely* want to impress their masters favorably. Instead, obey your masters sincerely. Do this because you reverence the Lord *Jesus* (OR, *God*). ²³ Whatever *work* you do, work wholeheartedly. Work wholeheartedly, like those who are working for the Lord *Jesus*. Do not work like those who are working *merely* for *their* masters, ²⁴ because you know that it is the Lord who will *properly/justly* repay you. That is, you will receive what God has promised. *Remember that* it is Christ who is the real master whom you are serving. ²⁵ But *God* will judge impartially any of you who keeps doing wrong. He will judge you according to what you have done that is wrong.

4 ¹ You masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, because you know that you have a master who is in heaven *who will say whether he approves of what you have done*.

Colossians 4:2-4

THEME: Pray to God persistently. And pray that God will give me opportunities to declare the message about Christ.

² Pray to God persistently, and as you pray be alert and be thanking God. ³ Since I am in prison [MTY] because *I declared the message about Christ* that God has now revealed, pray also for me that God will give me opportunities [MTY] to speak, in order that I might declare it. ⁴ That is, pray for me that *God will enable me to make his message known publicly*. I need to do this because I know that I should declare it.

Colossians 4:5-6

THEME: Always speak wisely and graciously to those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus.

⁵ Act wisely towards those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus [MTY]; use every opportunity to do that. ⁶ In particular, always speak graciously and in a pleasant way *to those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus*. As a result, you will come to know in what manner you should answer each one of them.

Colossians 4:7-9

THEME: Tychicus will tell you all that has been happening to me.

⁷ Tychicus will tell you all that has been happening to me. He is a fellow believer whom I/we(*exc*) love and who helps me faithfully and who serves the Lord *Jesus* together with me. ⁸ The reason that I am sending Tychicus to you *with this letter* is that he might know how you are and in order that he might strengthen you *spiritually*. (OR, in order that you might know about us(*exc*) and in order that he might comfort you.) ⁹ I am sending him to you with Onesimus, who is a faithful fellow believer whom I/we(*inc*) love and who is your fellow townsman. They will tell you all about what has been happening here.

Colossians 4:10-14

THEME: My fellow workers here greet you.

¹⁰ Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, and Mark, who is Barnabas's cousin, <say that they are thinking fondly about you/send you their greetings>. I have instructed you about Mark, so if he comes to you, welcome him. ¹¹ Jesus, who is also called Justus, also <says that he is thinking fondly about you/greets you/sends you his greetings>. These three men are the only Jewish *believers* who are working with me in order that people would submit to God as their king, and they have all comforted me. ¹² Epaphras, who is your fellow townsman and who serves Christ Jesus, <says that he is thinking fondly about you/greets you/sends you his greetings>.

Epaphras prays earnestly for you very often, that you might be spiritually mature and that you might be fully convinced about {know fully} all that God wills. ¹³ He prays this because he is deeply concerned for you, for those who live in Laodicea *city*, and for those who live in Hierapolis *city*; I can assure you that it is true. ¹⁴ Luke, the doctor, whom I/we(exc) love, and Demas <say that they are thinking fondly about you/send you their greetings>.

Colossians 4:15-17

THEME: Obey these instructions.

¹⁵ Tell the fellow believers who live in Laodicea *city* and Nympha^b and the congregation that *meets* in her house that we <are thinking fondly about them/send them our greetings>. ¹⁶ After *someone* reads this letter *publicly* to you, cause *someone* to also read it to the congregation that is in Laodicea *city*. And as for the *letter that I wrote to the congregation that is in Laodicea city*, make sure that it is also read *among you* {you should also read that letter} publicly. ¹⁷ Say to Archippus, "Make sure that you complete the task that God appointed you to do, because you have a close relationship with the Lord Jesus."

Colossians 4:18

THEME: I, Paul, am penning this myself in order that you may know that this letter was sent by me. Remember to pray about the fact that I am in prison.

¹⁸ I, Paul, <am thinking fondly about you/send you my greetings>. *Having taken the pen from my scribe, I am now writing this myself in order that you may know that I have truly sent this letter. Remember to pray about the fact that I am in prison*^[MTY]. *I pray that our Lord Jesus Christ would continue to act graciously towards you all.*

^b Some Greek manuscripts have the name for a man: "...and Nymphas and the congregation that *meets* in his house." [Nympha is a name for a woman.]

The Apostle Paul wrote letters to the Christians at Thessalonica. We call this first letter **1 Thessalonians**

1 Thessalonians 1:1

THEME: I, Paul, greet you believers who are in Thessalonica

1 ¹ I, Paul, am writing this letter. Silas and Timothy are with me. We(exc) are sending this letter to you who are the congregation of believers in Thessalonica city. We(inc) all worship (OR, trust in) God our Father [MET] and our Lord Jesus Christ. We three desire/pray that God, our Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord, will continue to act kindly toward you and will continue to cause you to have inner peace.

1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

THEME: We always thank God for you all. We continually remember the way you live as believers and we know that God chose you. The Holy Spirit enabled us to powerfully tell you the good message, and although people persecuted you greatly, you were joyful. As a result, you inspired all the believers who are in Macedonia and Achaia to trust in God firmly, as you do.

²We always thank God for you all when we mention you while we pray (OR, when we pray for you). ³We thank God because we continually remember that you work for God because you trust in him and you earnestly/energetically help people because you love them. You also endure it when people cause you to suffer. You endure it because you confidently expect that our Lord Jesus Christ will soon return from heaven to rescue you! ⁴My fellow believers whom God loves, we also thank him because we know that he chose you to become his people. ⁵We know that he chose you because when we told that message to you, we did not speak only words. The Holy Spirit helped us to speak powerfully/effectively, and he strongly assured us that he was powerfully working in you by means of the message about Christ that we told to you. You yourselves know that, because you know how we spoke and how we conducted ourselves when we were with you, in order that we might help you. ⁶We also know that God chose you because we have now heard that you have endured your troubles when people caused you to suffer very much because you believed in Christ. You endured just like the Lord Jesus Christ endured, and just like we did when people caused us to suffer. At that time you were joyful because the Holy Spirit caused you to be joyful. ⁷As a result of your joyfully enduring your troubles, all the believers who live in Macedonia and Achaia provinces have heard how firmly you trust God. So they know that they should firmly trust in God as you do. ⁸Other people have heard you tell the message from the Lord Jesus. Then they also have proclaimed the message to people who live throughout Macedonia and Achaia provinces. Not only that, but people who live in many faraway places [HYP] have heard that you trust in God. As a result, we do not need to tell people what God has done in your lives. ⁹People who live far from you are telling others what happened when we were with you. They also report that you stopped worshipping things that <you/your ancestors> considered to be gods and now you worship God. As a result, you serve the God who is all-powerful and who is the real God. ¹⁰They tell us that now you wait expectantly for his Son to return to earth from heaven. You firmly believe that God caused him to live again after he died. You believe also that Jesus will rescue all of us, who trust in him, from God's punishing us [MTY].

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

THEME: You and God know that it is true that we behaved in a very virtuous, upright, and irreproachable manner toward you. You know also that we continually exhorted, encouraged, and urged that you behave in the way that God's people should.

2 ¹My fellow believers, you know that our time with you was very worthwhile/effective [LIT]. ²Although people in Philippi city previously mistreated us(exc) and insulted us, as you know, our God caused us to be courageous. As a result, we told you the good message that originates/comes from God, even though some people in your city also strongly <opposed us/tried to prevent us from telling God's message>. ³When we exhorted/urged (OR, tried to convince) you to obey God's message, we did not speak to you an untrue message. Instead, we spoke a true message. We do not want to get something for ourselves by immoral means. We do not try to deceive you or other people. ⁴On the contrary, we tell God's message because he trusted us to do that, because he examined us and considered us to be acceptable to tell people the message about Christ. As we teach people, we do not say what they like to hear. Instead, we say what God wants us to say, because he examines everything that we think and what we desire. ⁵We never <flattered you/said nice things about you insincerely>, as you know. We were never greedy, so we never needed to use words to <hide greediness from you/cause you to think that we were not greedy>. God knows that this is true! ⁶We never tried to get people to honor us, ⁷although we could demand that you should honor/respect us, because we are apostles who represent (OR, speak for) Christ. On the contrary, we were gentle when we were among you, as a mother gently takes care of her own children [SIM]. ⁸So, because we love you, we were delighted to personally tell you the good message that God gave

us. But also we were delighted to lovingly do all that we could do to help you [SYN] because <you had become very dear to us/we had begun to love you very much>. ⁹ My fellow believers, you remember that we worked very hard [DOU] *in order to <support ourselves/earn money to buy what we needed> while we were with you.* We worked *during the day and also at night* in order that we would not have to ask any one of you to give us what we needed, *while* we proclaimed to you the good message that God *gave us*. ¹⁰ You know that it is true, and God knows that it is true, that we conducted our lives in a very pure, right, and irreproachable/faultless [DOU] manner toward you believers. ¹¹ You know also that *we lovingly behaved/acted toward* each one of you as a father *lovingly behaves/acts toward* his own children [SIM]. ¹² *Specifically,* we kept strongly exhorting/urging and encouraging you that you conduct your lives in the way that God's people should, *because* he has invited you to become his people over whom he will wonderfully rule [HEN].

1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

THEME: *We continually thank God also that you accepted as true a message that does not originate from human beings. Instead, you accepted as true the message that originates from God, and the result was that people caused you to suffer as Christ did.*

¹³ We continually thank God also because when you heard the message *that* we told to you, you accepted it as the true message, the good message that God *gave to us*. We did not invent it. *We also thank God* that he is changing your lives because you trust this message [PRS]. ¹⁴ My fellow believers, *we know that you sincerely believed the message from God,* because the manner in which you acted was just like the manner in which *the congregations* in Judea acted. They also *worship God, and they <have a close relationship with/are united to>* Christ Jesus. Specifically, you endured it *when your own countrymen mistreated you because you believe the message from God,* in the same manner that those *Jewish believers in Judea* endured it *when the Jews who do not believe in Christ mistreated them*. ¹⁵ *Unbelieving Jews* are the ones whom God considers guilty *for killing the Lord Jesus, as well as for killing many prophets.* Other unbelieving Jews forced us to leave *many towns*. They really make God angry; and *they are* opposed to *what is best for* all human beings! ¹⁶ *Specifically,* when we tell *the good message* to non-Jewish people in order that they can be saved *{that God will save them}* *spiritually,* these *unbelieving Jews* try to stop/prevent us from doing that. Because they continually sin more and more, they are almost reaching the limit that has been *set by God* [MET]! God will soon punish them [MTY], at last, for all their sins!

1 Thessalonians 2:17-20

THEME: *It is because of you that we are pleased and joyful. So when people forced Silas, Timothy and me to be separated from you for a short time, we strongly desired to be with you.*

¹⁷ My fellow believers, when for a short time [IDM] *those people forced us to be separated from you, we felt like parents <who had lost all their children/whose children had died>* [MET]. *Although* we were far away from you, *we were still emotionally concerned about you,* and we strongly desired to be present with you. ¹⁸ *You can know that* we wanted to return to you. Indeed I, Paul, *tried to return twice* [IDM]. But *we did not return because* each time Satan *prevented us from returning*. ¹⁹ *We were strongly desiring to be with you,* because truly you [RHQ] *are the ones about whom we are proud and are joyful!* It is because we are confident that you *will <remain faithful/continue believing in God>* that we *will be joyful!* You are the ones who we confidently expect *will keep strongly trusting in God!* It is because you *will <remain faithful/continue believing in God>* that we *will be proud of the work that we have done* [MET, RHQ] *when our Lord Jesus examines what we all have done, at the time when he comes back to earth!* ²⁰ Indeed, it is because of you that *even now* we are pleased and are joyful!

1 Thessalonians 3:1-5

THEME: *When I could no longer endure worrying about you, I sent Timothy to you in order to find out whether or not you were still trusting in God.*

3 ¹ As a result of that, when I could no longer endure *worrying about you,* I decided that *Silas and I* would stay behind alone in Athens *city,* ² and we two sent *Timothy to you.* *You know that he is* our close associate and also works for God by *proclaiming* the message about Christ. *Silas and I sent him* in order that he would urge you to continue to strongly trust in Christ. ³ We wanted that *none of you* would consider turning away from Christ as a result of *people* causing you to suffer. You know that *God has planned that we who trust in him will suffer like that when people do that to us who trust in him.* ⁴ Remember that when we were present with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted {that *people* would cause us to suffer}. And because that is what happened, you know that *what we said* was true! ⁵ *I was afraid that Satan,* the one who tempts us, had caused you to *stop trusting in Christ.* *If that had happened,* we would have worked uselessly *while we were present with you!* So I sent *Timothy to you* in order to find out whether or not you were *still trusting in Christ.* I sent him because I could no longer endure *not knowing <about your spiritual condition/whether or not you were still trusting in Christ>.*

1 Thessalonians 3:6-10

THEME: *Now Timothy has just returned and has told us the good news that you still trust in Christ. As a result, we have been cheered up, and we cannot thank God adequately for what he has done for you. Very frequently we ask God that we will be able to visit you and help you to trust him more strongly.*

⁶ Now Timothy has just returned to Silas and me from *being with you*, and he has told us the good news that you *still* trust in Christ and that you love *him* (OR, *each other*). He told us also that you always happily remember us *and that you strongly desire that we visit you, just like we strongly desire to visit you.* ⁷ My fellow believers, *even though* we are suffering very much [DOU] because of what people are doing to us here, we have been cheered up because *Timothy told us about your still trusting in Christ.* ⁸ Now we feel very encouraged [IDM] that you continue to strongly *trust* in the Lord Jesus. ⁹ *«We cannot thank God adequately for what he has done for you!/How can we thank God enough for what he has done for you?»* [RHQ] We greatly rejoice concerning you *when we pray to our God!* ¹⁰ We constantly [HYP] and fervently/earnestly ask God that *we will be able to visit you* [SYN] and that *we will be able to help you to trust in Christ/God more strongly!*

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

THEME: *We pray that God will help us to return to you and that the Lord Jesus will help you to love each other and other people more and more, just like we love you more and more.*

¹¹ *We pray to God, our Father, and to our Lord Jesus, that they will «clear the way/make it possible» so that we can return to you.* ¹² As for you, we *pray that* the Lord Jesus will help you to love each other and other people more and more, just like we *continue loving you more and more.* ¹³ *We pray that our Lord Jesus will strengthen your purpose/desire to do what pleases God* (OR, *strengthen you spiritually*). We pray that God our Father will enable you to conduct your lives in a way that is pure and that *no one can justly criticize so that when Jesus comes back to earth accompanied by all those who belong to him, he will be pleased with you.*

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2

THEME: *Just like we told you previously, we strongly urge you to increasingly behave in a way that will please God.*

4 ¹⁻² Now, my fellow believers, *I want to write about some other matters.* Because we all have a close relationship with the Lord Jesus, we(exc) strongly urge you [DOU] to conduct your lives in a way that pleases God. We taught you to do that, and you know that we did that as a result of what the Lord Jesus *told us to say.* We know that you are conducting your lives that way, but *we strongly urge that you do that even more.*

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

THEME: *God wants you, by your behaving in a sexually pure way, to show that you completely belong to him.*

³ God wants you to live pure lives that will show that you completely belong to him. He wants you to avoid doing any sexually immoral acts (OR, avoid being sexually immoral in any way). ⁴ *That is, he wants each one of you to know how to control your own sexual desires* [EUP]. He wants you to live pure lives that all people will see as good. ⁵ You must not lustfully desire *to do* immoral acts as unbelievers [MTY] *do* who do not obey God. ⁶ *God wants each one of you to control your sexual desires, in order that no one of you sin against your fellow believer and take advantage of him or her by doing things like that.* Remember that we strongly warned you previously [DOU] that the Lord Jesus will punish all *people who do* sexually immoral acts. ⁷ When God chose us *believers*, he did not want us to *be people who* behave in a sexually immoral way. On the contrary, *he wants us to be people who* behave in a morally pure way. ⁸ So I warn you that those who disregard *this teaching of mine* are not just disregarding a human being. On the contrary, *they are disregarding God, because God commanded it. Remember that God sent his Spirit, who is holy, to live in you!*

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

THEME: *We urge you to increasingly love each other, to strive to work at your own occupations, and not meddle in others' affairs.*

⁹ *I want to urge you again that you should love your fellow believers* [MET]. You do not really need that *anyone* write to you about that, because God has already taught you *how to love each other,* ¹⁰ and because you already are *showing that you love your fellow believers* [HYP] *who live in other places in your province* of Macedonia. Nevertheless, my fellow believers, we urge you to increasingly *love each other.* ¹¹ *We urge you also to eagerly strive/try to attend to your own affairs and to not meddle/interfere with the affairs of others.* We urge you also to work at your own occupations/jobs *to earn what you need to live.* Remember that we taught you previously to live like that. ¹² If you do these things, unbelievers will acknowledge/see that you behave decently/properly, and you will not have to depend on others *to «supply/give to you» what you need.*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

THEME: *God will cause to live again those believers who died and will bring them to the sky with Jesus. Encourage each other by telling this message.*

¹³ My fellow believers, we also want you to understand well [LIT] *what will happen* to our fellow believers *who now* are dead [EUP]. *You must not be/do like* the unbelievers. They *grieve deeply for people who die* because they do not confidently expect *people to live again after they die*. ¹⁴ We *believers* know that it is true that Jesus died and that he rose to live again. So we *also know well that* God will cause those *believers* who died [EUP] to live again. We know that he will cause them to go to heaven (OR, come) with Jesus as a result of God's *commanding them to arise and <go to/come with> Jesus*. ¹⁵ I write this because the Lord *Jesus* revealed to me what I am now telling you. *Some of you may think that* when the Lord *Jesus* comes back, he will consider that we *believers* who are still living will be superior to those *believers* who have died [EUP], because we will *meet Jesus first*. *That is certainly not true!* ¹⁶ It is the Lord *Jesus* himself who will descend from heaven. *When he comes down, he will command all of us believers to rise*. The chief angel will shout with a loud voice, and *another angel* will blow a trumpet for God. Then (OR, As a result), the first thing that will happen is that the people who *trusted* in Christ who have died will live again. ¹⁷ After that, God will powerfully take up into the clouds all of us *believers* who are still living on *this earth*. At the same time, *he will take up those believers who have died*, in order that we *all* might together meet/welcome the Lord *Jesus* in the sky. As a result of that, we *all* will be with him **forever**. ¹⁸ Because *all this is true*, encourage/comfort each other by *<sharing this teaching with each other/reminding each other of this teaching>*.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-8

THEME: *We believers should be prepared for the time when the Lord Jesus returns and not be as unbelievers who will be unprepared. We must not be like them. On the contrary, we must be vigilant and self-controlled.*

5 ¹ My fellow believers, *I want to tell you more* about the time or period *when the Lord Jesus will come back*. Really, you do not need that I write to you about that, ² because you yourselves know accurately *about it already!* *You know that the Lord Jesus will return* [MTY] *unexpectedly* (OR, *when some people are unprepared*). *People will not expect him, just like no one knows when a thief comes unexpectedly at night* [SIM]. ³ *At a future time* many people will say, "All is peaceful and we are safe!" Then suddenly he will come to punish them severely! Just like a pregnant woman who *experiences birth pains cannot stop those pains*, those people will definitely not *have any way to escape their punishment*. ⁴⁻⁵ *Just like people in darkness are unaware of what is happening around them, most people are not aware of what is about to happen to them* [MET, PRS]. Just like a thief *comes unexpectedly for people who are unaware, that time of punishment will come on people when they are not expecting it* [SIM]. But you, my fellow believers, are people who are very much aware [LIT] of what is going to happen. As a result, you will be expecting [LIT] those things [MTY] to happen [PRS] All of us *believers* are people [IDM] *who do what is right, as people usually do when it is daytime* [MET]. We are not *people who do evil things, as some people do when it is dark* [MET]. ⁶ So we *believers* must be aware of what is happening. We must be watching carefully, *as people who are awake are watchful for a thief* [MET]. We must be self-controlled, as people who are *<sober/not drunk>* are able to control what they do [MET]. People who sleep [MET] *are unaware of what is happening, and unbelievers are like that*. ⁷ It is at night when people are *unaware of what is happening because they are asleep*, and it is at night when people become drunk *and they do very wrong actions/things*. ⁸ But we *believers* are people who *should do what is right* [MET], so we must be self-controlled, *as people in the daytime are usually not drunk and are able to control what they do* [MET]. *As Roman soldiers protect themselves by putting on breastplates and helmets* [MET], we *believers* must *protect ourselves by continuing to trust and love the Lord Jesus* and by continuing to confidently expect that he will save us from *God's punishing us at the time when he will punish other people*.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

THEME: *God has destined us believers to be saved from future punishment and to be able to live together with our Lord Jesus after he returns. Since this is true, encourage each other.*

⁹ When God chose us, he did not plan for us to *be people whom he will severely punish* [MTY]. On the contrary, *he decided* that he would save us because of *our trusting in what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us*. ¹⁰ Jesus died to *atone/pay* for our *sins* in order that we might be able to live together with him, whether we are alive [MET] or whether we are dead [EUP] *when he returns to earth*. ¹¹ Because *you know that this is true*, continue to encourage/comfort each other, as indeed you now are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

THEME: *Recognize as leaders those people who care for and instruct you; highly esteem and love them. Live peacefully with each other.*

¹² My fellow believers, we *three* ask that you recognize/honor as *leaders* those people who work hard for you. *Specifically, respect those who lead you as fellow believers who <have a close relationship with/are united to> the Lord Jesus*. They warn you to *stop doing what is wrong* (OR, they teach you to *do what is right*). ¹³ That is, we *ask that you* consider those

leaders to be very important and that you love them, because they work *hard to help you*. We also urge you to live peacefully with each other.

1 Thessalonians 5:14-15

THEME: *Warn believers who will not work, and encourage and help those who need it. Be patient with all people. Do good deeds to them all, including those who do evil deeds to you.*

¹⁴ My fellow believers, we urge that you warn *believers* who will not work *in order to* <obtain/earn the money to buy> things that they need to live. Tell them that they are behaving wrongly. We urge you that you encourage *believers* who are fearful (OR, discouraged), and that you help all people who are weak *in any way*. We also urge you to be patient with everyone.

¹⁵ Make sure that none of you does evil deeds to anyone *who has done* evil to you. On the contrary, you must always try to do good *deeds* to each other (OR, to fellow believers) and to everyone else.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

THEME: *Always rejoice, pray, and thank God.*

¹⁶ Be joyful <at all times/always>, ¹⁷ pray **continually**, ¹⁸ and thank God <in all circumstances/regardless of what happens>. God wants you *to behave* like that *because of what* Christ Jesus *has done for you* (OR, because you have a close relationship with Christ Jesus).

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

THEME: *Evaluate all messages that people claim that the Holy Spirit gave them. Accept authentic messages and obey them.*

¹⁹ Do not *refuse the urging from God's Spirit when he is working* [MTY] among you. That would be like throwing water on a fire [MET]! ²⁰ Specifically, do not despise messages that the Holy Spirit reveals to someone *and reject them automatically*.

²¹ On the contrary, evaluate all *such messages*. Accept the *messages that are truly from God, and obey them*. ²² Do not obey any kind of evil *message*.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

THEME: *We pray that God will cause you to be distinct people who behave right in every way, and I am sure that he will do this.*

²³ We pray to God that he will change you to become more and more like his people should be. He is the one who causes *his people* to have *inner peace*. That is, we pray that he will help you so that in all that you think, in all that you desire, and in all that you do, you will be without fault. We ask him that he will keep doing that *until* our Lord Jesus Christ comes back to earth. ²⁴ Because God has invited you *to be his people, you can* **certainly** trust him to keep on helping you in that way.

1 Thessalonians 5:25-28

THEME: *Pray for us. Affectionately greet all your fellow believers, and make certain that someone reads this letter aloud to all of them. May the Lord bless you.*

²⁵ My fellow believers, pray for me and for Silas and for Timothy. ²⁶ When you *gather together as believers*, greet each other affectionately, as fellow believers *should*. ²⁷ Make certain that you read this letter to all the believers *who may be absent when you read it at first, knowing that the Lord Jesus wants you to do it*. ²⁸ I pray that our Lord Jesus Christ will continue to act kindly toward you all.

The Apostle Paul wrote letters to the Christians at Thessalonica. We call this second letter **2 Thessalonians**

2 Thessalonians 1:1-2

THEME: We, Paul, Silas, and Timothy, are sending this letter to the congregation of God's people in Thessalonica. We pray that God will continue to bless you with his kindness and inner peace.

1 ¹I, Paul, am writing this letter. Silas and Timothy are with me. We are sending this letter to you. You are the congregation of God's people in Thessalonica city. You belong to God our Father, and you belong to Jesus Christ our Lord. ²We pray that God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord, will continue to act kindly toward you and will continue to cause you to have inner peace.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

THEME: We thank God very frequently that you are trusting in the Lord Jesus more and more.

³Our fellow believers, we thank God very frequently [HYP] for you because we believers ought to thank God for each other, and specifically it is appropriate/right that we should thank God for you. We thank him that you are trusting in the Lord Jesus more and more, and that each one of you is loving each of the others more and more. ⁴As a result, we keep proudly telling about you to the other congregations who worship God. Specifically, we tell them that you are being steadfast and that you continue believing in the Lord Jesus, even though you are frequently suffering [DOU] as a result of people causing you trouble.

2 Thessalonians 1:5-10

THEME: God will judge all people justly. Specifically, he will publicly declare that you are worthy to enter that place where he will rule his people forever.

⁵Your being steadfast <shows/indicates to> us clearly that God will judge all people justly. Specifically, he will publicly declare that you are worthy as his people to be in that place where he will rule forever, because you also are suffering as a result of telling others about letting God rule your lives. ⁶God will certainly cause trouble for those people who are troubling you, because he considers that it is just that he should punish such people for doing that to you. ⁷He also considers that it is just that he should reward you who are being troubled, by <giving you relief/causing your suffering to end>. He will do that for both you and us when our Lord Jesus will descend from heaven, together with his powerful angels and with blazing fire. ⁸Then he will punish those people who do not want to know him and those who refuse to obey the message about our Lord Jesus. ⁹Our Lord Jesus will forbid them from ever coming near to him and near to the glory which he has because he is so powerful (OR, the glory that is manifested by his power). He will cause those people to suffer forever. ¹⁰The Lord Jesus will do this when he comes back from heaven at the time that God has decided. As a result, all we who are his people will praise him because of what he has done for his own people, and all we believers will marvel at our Lord because of what he has done. And you will be there, too, because you believed what we testified to you.

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

THEME: We are praying very frequently for you that God will consider you worthy to receive that to which he summoned you.

¹¹In order that you might praise Jesus like this, we are also praying very frequently [HYP] for you. We pray that you will be able to show our God that you are worthy to receive that which he chose you to receive. We pray also that he would powerfully enable you to do good in every way that you desire, and that he would also enable you to do powerfully every good deed that you do because you believe in Jesus Christ. ¹²We pray this because we want you to praise our Lord Jesus, and we want him to honor you. This will happen because God, whom we worship/serve, and our Lord Jesus Christ will continue acting kindly toward you in ways that you do not deserve.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3a

THEME: Do not be quickly troubled in mind and alarmed by any message that the Day of the Lord has already come.

2 ¹Now I want to write to you about the time when our Lord Jesus Christ will return and when God will gather us together to where Jesus is. My fellow believers, I urge you ²that you think calmly about any message that claims/says that the Lord has already come again. Do not be shaken or alarmed/worried by any such message. It does not matter if it is a message

that someone claims God's Spirit revealed to him, or if it is some other message that someone has spoken, or whether it is a message that someone claims that I wrote in a letter. ³ Do not allow anyone to deceive you in any way with the result that you believe any such message.

2 Thessalonians 2:3b-5

THEME: *The Lord will come only after that time when the man who will sin very greatly will appear.*

The Lord will not come [MTY] immediately. First, many people [PRS] will rebel against God. The result of their rebelling will be that they will accept and obey the man who will sin very greatly against God. ⁴ He will be the supreme enemy of God. He will proudly exalt himself above everything that people consider to be God and above everything that people worship. As a result of wanting people to worship him, he will even enter God's Temple and sit down there to rule! He will publicly proclaim that he himself is God! But God will certainly punish that man forever! ⁵ <I am sure that you remember that I kept telling you these things while I was still with you there in Thessalonica./Do you not remember that I continued telling to you these things while I was still with you there in Thessalonica?> [RHQ]

2 Thessalonians 2:6-8

THEME: *This man will be revealed by God when he who is now preventing him from being revealed will have been removed by God.*

⁶ You also know that there is something (OR, someone) that is preventing this man from being revealed {from revealing himself}. He is being <held back/restrained> now in order that he be revealed {that he reveal himself} at the time that God has planned [MTY]. ⁷ Although Satan is already secretly causing people to reject God's laws, <the one/God> who is preventing this man from revealing himself now will continue to prevent him until he/God removes him. ⁸ It is then that God will allow this man, who rejects God's laws completely, to be revealed {to reveal himself}. Then the Lord Jesus, by what he commands [MTY], will destroy him. Jesus, by his own glorious arrival, will cause him to become completely powerless.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

THEME: *When this man is present, he will completely deceive those who will perish.*

⁹ But before Jesus destroys him, Satan will give him very great power. As a result, he will do all kinds of supernatural miracles and amazing deeds [DOU] that will seem as though God has enabled him to do them. ¹⁰ And by doing wicked deeds, he will completely deceive those who will certainly <perish/go to hell>. He will deceive them because they will have refused to love the true message. So they will not be saved {God will not save them}. ¹¹ So, God, by his power, will enable this man to easily deceive them, so that they will believe what this man falsely claims/says that he is. ¹² The result will be that everyone will be justly condemned {that God will justly condemn everyone} to be punished who did not believe the true message, but who instead gladly chose to be doing what is wicked.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

THEME: *God chose you and summoned you in order that you should be saved and share in Christ's glory.*

¹³ Our fellow believers, whom our Lord Jesus loves, we thank God very frequently for you. It is appropriate/right for us to do that, because God chose you <from the beginning [MTY] of creation/before the world existed> in order that he might save you as a result of your believing the true message and as a result of God's Spirit setting you apart for God. ¹⁴ We thank God that he chose you as a result of our proclaiming the message about Christ to you, in order that you might <share in/have> some of the glory that our Lord Jesus Christ has.

2 Thessalonians 2:15

THEME: *Continue believing the teaching that we committed to you.*

¹⁵ So, our fellow believers, continue to be firm concerning what you believe; that is, continue believing the true teaching that we committed/taught to you by our speaking to you and by our writing a letter to you.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

THEME: *We pray that our Lord Jesus Christ himself will encourage you and cause you to continue doing and speaking what is good.*

¹⁶ We pray for you to our Lord Jesus Christ himself and to God, our Father. God loves us and encourages us and causes us to confidently expect to receive the eternal things that he has promised to give to us as a result of Christ acting kindly toward us in a way we did not deserve. ¹⁷ We strongly pray that God and Jesus together will encourage you! And we pray that they will cause you to continue doing and saying things that God considers to be good.

2 Thessalonians 3:1-2

THEME: Pray that more and more people will believe the message about our Lord Jesus.

3 ¹As for the other matters, *our* fellow believers, pray for us that more and more *people will* hear [PRS] our message *about our Lord Jesus*. Pray that they will believe this message, as you *have done*. ²Pray also for us that we will be rescued {that God will rescue us} from those very perverse/evil people *here* who *cause us to suffer*. *Pray like that* because *they and many others* refuse to believe [LIT] *this message*.

2 Thessalonians 3:3-5

THEME: Our Lord Jesus will cause you to continue to be steadfast and he will protect you from the evil one.

³Remember that our Lord Jesus is trustworthy! So we are sure that he will cause you to continue to be steadfast. We are also sure that he will protect you from Satan, the evil one (OR, from evil). ⁴Because of your close relationship with our Lord Jesus, we are confident about you that you are obeying what we have commanded you, and we are confident that you will obey what we are commanding you in this letter. ⁵We pray that our Lord Jesus would enable you to continue knowing that God loves you. We pray also that Christ will cause you to continue being steadfast (OR, being steadfast as he was steadfast).

2 Thessalonians 3:6-11

THEME: We command you to disassociate yourselves from every fellow believer who refuses to work.

⁶Our fellow believers, we command you, with the authority [MTY] that our Lord Jesus Christ *has given to us*, that you stop associating with every fellow believer who is lazy and refuses to work. That is, you must stay away from those who are not *conducting their lives* in the manner that we taught you. ⁷We tell you this because you yourselves know that you should behave like we behaved. We <did not just sit around without working/were never lazy> while we were living among you. ⁸Specifically, we did not eat anyone's food if we did not pay *that person* for it. Instead, we worked very hard <to support ourselves/to earn the money to buy what we needed>. We worked hard [DOU] during the day and the night, in order that we would not have to depend on any of you *to supply what we needed*. ⁹We have always had the right *to depend on you for money, but instead we worked hard in order to make ourselves* examples for you, in order that you should behave like we behave. ¹⁰Remember that when we were *there* with you, we kept commanding you that if any *fellow believer* refuses to work, *you should not give* him food to eat. ¹¹We command you this again now, because someone has told to us that some of you are lazy and not working at all! Not only that, some of you are interfering *with what other people are doing!*

2 Thessalonians 3:12

THEME: We command those fellow believers who are not working to support themselves by settling down and working.

¹²We command those fellow believers who are not working, and urge *them* by the authority [MTY] of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they settle down and <support themselves by working/work to earn money to buy what they need>.

2 Thessalonians 3:13

THEME: You others, do not stop doing what is right because you are discouraged.

¹³Fellow believers! Do not ever get tired of doing what is right!

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15

THEME: Publicly identify any fellow believer who does not obey what we have written in this letter and do not associate with him.

¹⁴If any *fellow believer* refuses to work and does not obey what I have written in this letter, <publicly identify that person/tell the congregation what that person is doing>. Then do not associate with him, in order that he may become ashamed. ¹⁵Do not think of him as though he was *your enemy*; instead, warn him as *you would warn your other fellow believers*.

2 Thessalonians 3:16a

THEME: I pray that our Lord Jesus himself will give peace to you always and in every situation.

¹⁶I pray that our Lord Jesus himself, who gives *inner peace to his people*, will give *inner peace* to you always <and in every situation/whatever happens>.

2 Thessalonians 3:16b-18

THEME: In closing, I pray that our Lord Jesus will continue to bless you all. I, Paul, am greeting you and I am writing this myself in order that you may know that it is I who have sent this letter.

I pray that our Lord Jesus will continue to help you all. ¹⁷ *Now, having taken the pen from my scribe, I, Paul, am sending this greeting to you as I write this myself [SYN]. I do this in all my letters in order that you may know that it is truly I who have sent this letter. This is how I always end my letters. ¹⁸ I pray that our Lord Jesus Christ will continue to act kindly to you all.*

The Apostle Paul wrote letters to his assistants. We call this letter 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 1:1-2

THEME: I, Paul, write to you, Timothy. May you be blessed by God and Christ Jesus with their kindness and mercy.

1 ¹ I, Paul, am writing this letter. You know that I am an apostle. I represent Christ Jesus because God and Christ Jesus commanded me to do it. God is the one who saved us, and Jesus is the one for whom we are confidently waiting to return. ² You, Timothy, are like [MET] a true son to me because you trusted in Christ after I told you about him.

I pray/desire that God, who is our Father, and Christ Jesus, who is our Lord, will continue to act kindly and mercifully to you, and that they will give you inner peace.

1 Timothy 1:3-20

THEME: Defend and promote the true Christian doctrine. Teach it and live by it. Also I instruct you how to strengthen the congregation, which upholds the truth.

³ I urge you now, just like I urged you when I was going to Macedonia province, that you remain there in Ephesus city. Stay there so that you may command certain persons who teach other believers that they not teach false doctrines/teachings.

⁴ And tell people to not continually give their attention to stories that tell about our ancestors, stories in which there are <genealogies/lists of our ancestors' names> that seem to be endless. You must command your congregation not to think that these stories are valuable, because whenever people think that, they just start arguing about things uselessly, instead of teaching God's plan, which is concerned with what we believe (OR, which we know because we trust in Christ).

⁵ I commanded you to teach them to have pure desires [MTY] and thus to know within themselves that God approves of what they do, and to sincerely believe the true teaching. By doing that, they will love God well. ⁶ There are some people who have turned away from these true teachings. As a result, they just discuss what is useless. ⁷ They desire to teach the laws that God gave to Moses, but they do not understand what they are really saying nor the things about which they <confidently speak/say that they understand well>.

⁸ We know that the laws that God gave to Moses are good if people consider correctly what God intended them for. ⁹ We must remember that God did not give Moses those laws in order to condemn righteous people. By those laws he condemns people who act as though there were no laws and who refuse to obey anyone. He condemns those who do not revere God and those who sin habitually. By them he condemns those who refuse to perform rituals that are pleasing to God and who show no respect for religion. He condemns those who murder their fathers and who murder their mothers and who murder other people. ¹⁰ He condemns those who are sexually immoral and those who are homosexuals. He condemns those who kidnap/steal people in order to make them slaves. He condemns those who lie and those who promise something strongly but do not do what they promised. He condemns every other action that is contrary to our true teaching. ¹¹ This is what we teach people when we tell them the glorious/wonderful message about Christ that our awesome God has revealed and that he gave to me to teach.

¹² I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord who enabled me to do this work, because he considered that I could be trusted. So he appointed me in order that I would serve him. ¹³ Formerly I said evil things about him, I caused his people to suffer, and I acted very cruelly toward them. But Christ acted kindly to me since I <acted ignorantly/did not know that I was doing wrong> because I did not believe in him. ¹⁴ Our Lord kindly did for me what I did not deserve, so that I now believe in Christ Jesus and I love others (OR, him) because I belong to him.

¹⁵ Something that all we believers say is certainly true and is worthy for us to fully accept is that Christ Jesus came into the world in order to save sinful people so that God would not punish them for their sins. As for me, I consider that I have sinned more than all others. ¹⁶ Yet Christ Jesus acted mercifully to me in order that he might demonstrate to people that he is perfectly patient with them. He did that by his being patient with me, one who has sinned worse than all the others. He wanted what he did for me <to be an example/to demonstrate his patience> to people who would later believe in him and as a result would live forever.

¹⁷ I desire that people will honor and praise the only true God forever! Even though no one can see him, he is the King who rules for all time, who will never die! <Amen!/That is true!> ¹⁸ Timothy, you are like [MET] a son to me. So, <based on/in accordance with> what someone previously <prophesied/told what God revealed to them> about you, I am instructing you to strongly oppose those who teach false doctrines/teachings. You should oppose them like [MET] a soldier <fights strongly against/opposes> those who attack his countrymen. ¹⁹ Continue to believe the true teaching and do only what you know to be right! Remember that some people have <pushed aside/rejected> the true teaching. As a result, they no longer

believe [MET] what is true.²⁰ Among the ones who have done that are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I put in the hands of Satan, in order that *when Satan punishes them* they may learn not to teach wrong teaching.

1 Timothy 2:1-3:16

THEME: *I instruct you how people should conduct themselves who belong to God's family and who uphold the truth.*

2 ¹The first (OR, most important) thing that I urge *you to tell your congregation* is that *Christians* should continually ask God for *what they need*. They should also pray to God *for all other people*, and they should be thanking God.² Specifically, they should pray for rulers and for all *other people* who *are in important government positions/have authority*, in order that *God will help them to rule. As God enables the rulers to rule well*, we can live very peaceably as we conduct our lives doing all that God and others consider to be right and proper.³ It is good to *pray like that, and it pleases God, who saves us, when we pray like that*.⁴ He desires to save all people. He wants everyone to fully know *and accept his true message*.⁵ He is the *only one true God!* And there is *only one person* who talks to God on behalf of people. That person is Christ Jesus, who *himself* is a man!⁶ He gave *his life/himself* as a sacrifice in order to ransom/redeem all *people*, which showed at the proper time *that God desires that all people be saved {to save all people}*.⁷ As for **me**, he appointed me to declare *this message* and to be an apostle. I am telling the truth *about God appointing me*. I am not lying! He appointed me to teach the non-Jews that they should believe God's true message.

⁸I desire that in every place *where believers worship*, the men who pray publicly [MTY] should be men who are not practicing sin. When they pray, they should not be angry *with anyone* and they should not doubt *that God will answer* their prayers (OR, should not quarrel with anyone).⁹ *I would like that* the clothing that women wear be *modest and sensible/proper and appropriate* [DOU]. I want them to not fix their hair in fancy/elaborate ways, nor wear gold *jewelry*, nor pearls, nor expensive clothing *in order that they may make themselves attractive*.¹⁰ Instead, they should be doing things that women who *claim to/say that they* worship God should do; that is, they should be doing good deeds.¹¹ Women must learn to *listen quietly during the worship services* and to fully subject themselves *to the leaders of the congregation*.¹² I do not permit women to teach *men spiritual truth publicly*, and I do not permit them to have authority over men. Instead, *I desire that women listen quietly during the worship services*.¹³ Keep in mind that God made Adam first, and afterwards he made Eve,¹⁴ and that it was not Adam whom *Satan* deceived. As a result of the woman being deceived, she sinned. She did what God had told her not to do.¹⁵ But even though she did that, now women will be saved {God will accept women} as they bear children if they continue to trust *God* and if they continue to love others, and if they continue to conduct their lives *more and more acceptably to God/like God wants them to*, and if they continue to be modest.

3 ¹Anyone who aspires to be an elder *in the congregation* (OR, a bishop) desires a noble/honorable task.² *Since that is a task that others should respect*, an overseer must *conduct himself* in such a way that *no one* can truly *say that he has done anything that is wrong/find fault with him*. Specifically, *he must be faithful to his wife*. He must think clearly *about what he does*. He must be able to control *his behavior*. He must be sensible. He must be dignified/respectable. He must welcome and care for guests. He must be able to teach *God's truth* well.³ He must not be a drunkard. He must not be ready/quick to fight *those who make him angry*. On the contrary, he must be gentle and he must not be quarrelsome. He must not be greedy for much money.⁴ He must lead and care for his own household/family well. For example, he must be a man whom his children obey and completely respect,⁵ because if anyone does not know how he should lead well and care for well the people who live in his own house, *he certainly cannot care for God's congregation!/how can he care for God's congregation?* [RHQ]⁶ He must not be one who has just recently *trusted in Jesus*, because *if you choose a man like that he might become conceited/proud because you chose him so soon*. As a result of his being conceited/proud, God will condemn him like he condemned the devil *because he was conceited/proud*.⁷ Moreover, *an elder must conduct himself* in such a way that non-Christians speak well of him, because *if he conducts himself like that*, people will not *reproach/say evil things about* him, and the devil will not capture/trap him [MET] *like people capture animals* in a trap.

⁸*Those whom you choose to serve as deacons likewise must be ones who conduct themselves suitably/appropriately. Specifically, they must be serious/worthy that people respect them*. They must *be sincere/mean what they say*. They must not like to drink much alcohol. They must not *be greedy/have a strong desire to get money*.⁹ They must sincerely believe the message that *God has now revealed to us*.¹⁰ *Like you do for the elders*, you must examine *their character/how they conduct their lives* before you appoint them to serve. Then if they are without fault, let them serve as deacons.¹¹ Their wives (OR, The women who are deacons) likewise *must conduct themselves suitably/appropriately. Specifically, they must be serious/worthy that people respect them*. They must not speak evil about people. They must not drink much alcohol. They must be faithful in everything that they do.¹² Deacons must be faithful to their wives, and they must lead well and care well for their children and *the rest of the people* in their houses.¹³ Because if deacons serve well, people will respect them and they will be able to *speak very boldly/confidently* about what they believe concerning Christ Jesus.

¹⁴Although I hope that I will come to you soon, I am writing these things to you *now*¹⁵ in order that if I *am delayed/things prevent me from coming to you soon*, you will know how believers should conduct their lives *and you will be able to teach that to them. I am talking about* all those who are members of God's family, all the congregations that belong to the all-powerful God, all those who uphold/support [MET] the true *message*.¹⁶ It is certainly true that *the message that God has now revealed* is very wonderful! From it, we learn this spiritual truth that we say/sing about *Christ* (OR, We affirm this teaching to be true and very important.) It is what shows us how to live *in a godly manner/in a manner that pleases*

God>. It is what God has now revealed, even though it was not known before. *We <affirm/say that it is true> concerning Jesus Christ that,*

He is the one who appeared on the earth in a human body.

God's Spirit showed/demonstrated that he is/was truly the Messiah (OR, that he always acted righteously);

Angels saw him; people preached about him in many nations;

People in many parts of the world believed the message about him.

God took him up into heaven.

1 Timothy 4:1-16

THEME: *Take heed that you conduct yourself well and that you teach the true doctrine.*

4 ¹ God's Spirit has clearly told us that in later times some people will stop believing the *teaching* that *all of us* believe. Instead, they will listen to *evil* spirits who deceive *people*. *They will also believe the false* doctrines/teachings that *they receive from* these evil spirits. ²The people who teach those false doctrines/teachings are liars! And they do not feel at all guilty [MET] *when they teach such teachings!* ³For example, they forbid that *believers* marry *because they say that it makes us unacceptable to God*. They also *command* that people abstain from *eating certain* foods. But God created such foods in order that we can eat them! We who believe *in Christ* know the true *teaching*, and we thank *God for the food that he gives us*. *That is why we can eat it*. ⁴*We can eat all kinds of food* because all *food* that God has created is good. We should not refuse to eat certain kinds of food if we thank *God for it* when we eat it. ⁵It is acceptable to *God* because God *long ago* said that *all things that he made are good*, and because we pray that *God will bless it*.

⁶When you teach these things to your fellow believers, you will be showing that you, *whom* Christ Jesus *appointed*, serve them well. You will have become strong *spiritually* <by holding fast/by obeying> the true message that *we all* believe. ⁷You must completely reject godless, silly/foolish stories *from your ancestors that old people tell*. Keep training yourself so that you have more <godly behavior/behavior that pleases God>. ⁸*Some people say*, "It helps us in some ways if we exercise our bodies." But *I say that* people benefit very much if they live <in a godly way/in a way that pleases God>, because *if people live in a godly way*, that will benefit them both while they live now and when they live in the future life *in heaven*.

⁹Those are words that are absolutely true, and everybody should accept them! ¹⁰This is the reason why we work so hard [DOU] *for others*, because we confidently expect that God, who is all-powerful, *will do the things that he has promised*. He is the one who *wants to save all people*, so *he protects them*. He certainly *protects us* who believe *in Christ!* ¹¹Command these things and teach these things.

¹²*Timothy*, by the way you conduct your life, show the believers *in your congregation* how they should conduct their lives. Specifically, speak *good things*, conduct yourself *well*, love *people*, trust *God*, and be pure in every way. If you do all that, no one will *have any reason* <to belittle/to treat you disrespectfully> because of your being young. ¹³Until I come, be sure that you read *the Scriptures to the congregation* and that you exhort/urge them *to obey the Scriptures* and that you teach them. ¹⁴Do not neglect to use the *abilities that God gave to you* as a result of *people/us* <prophesying/telling what God revealed to them> *about you* and as a result of the elders putting their hands on you *to commission/appoint you to do God's work*. ¹⁵Do these things *that I have told you to do!* <Concentrate on them/Do them *sincerely and wholeheartedly*> in order that everyone may see that you are improving *in how you do them*.

¹⁶Be careful that you *conduct* yourself well. By continuing to do that, you will save yourself. And if you continue *to teach the good doctrine/teaching*, the result of your teaching will be that *God will save the people* who listen to you.

1 Timothy 5:1-25

THEME: *I instruct you how to act toward various groups in the church.*

5 ¹Do not rebuke/scold older men. Instead, exhort/advise them *respectfully* as you would *exhort/advise* your father. Exhort/advise younger men *gently* as you would exhort/advise your brothers. ²*Exhort/advise* older women *respectfully* as you would *exhort/advise* your mother. *Exhort/advise* younger women *gently* as you would *exhort/advise* your sisters; but you must act in a completely proper way as you do that.

³*Make sure that the congregation* respects widows who have no one to care for them. *They should respect them by taking care of them*. ⁴If a widow has children or grandchildren, these *children or grandchildren* should learn that they are to respect their own family first. By doing that they can repay their parents and grandparents for all that they did for them when they were young, because doing that pleases God. ⁵The widows who are really alone and have no one *to help them* confidently expect that God *will help them*. So night and day they pray, earnestly asking [DOU] *God that he will help them and others*. ⁶But widows who just want to have a lot of pleasure are *spiritually* [MET] dead, although they are *physically* alive. ⁷And tell *the congregation* that *the children or grandchildren should do* these things in order that *no one* can <criticize the believers/say that the believers are doing anything that is wrong>. ⁸If anyone does not take care of those who live in his own house, and especially if he does not take care of his own family, he has <denied/quit believing> what we believe and *we should consider that* he is worse than a person who does not believe *in Christ*.

⁹*You have a list of widows who will do work for the congregation and receive money*. Put women's names on the list *only if* they are more than sixty years old, and if they were faithful to their husbands. ¹⁰*Put women's names on that list only if it is*

known that they have zealously/wholeheartedly done every kind of good deed, if they have helped *children* who were afflicted/suffering, if they have <brought up/cared for> their children *properly/well*, if they have welcomed and cared for guests, and if they have humbly served [MTY] other believers. ¹¹As for younger widows, do not put their names on that list, because they *promise to do work for the congregation, but instead of doing that, they usually want to marry again* (OR, marry an unbeliever) when they have strong desires. ¹²If that happens, they may become guilty of not having done what they had promised *to do for the congregation* (OR, promised *Christ that they would do.*) ¹³In addition, they *generally* become lazy. Specifically, as they *just* go about from house to house they also begin <to gossip/to talk about people> and to meddle in other people's affairs, saying what they should not say. ¹⁴So I advise that *instead of putting the names of younger widows on the list, they marry again, that they bear/have children, that they manage their homes well, and that they do nothing about which an enemy can say bad things about them.* ¹⁵*I say this* because some *younger widows* have stopped *obeying Christ* in order to obey Satan.

¹⁶If any woman who believes *in Christ* has widows *in her household/family*, she should take care of them. The congregation should not be burdened by having {She should not depend on the congregation} *to take care of their needs*. The congregation should take care of the widows who truly *have no one to care for them*.

¹⁷*Each congregation* should pay well the elders who lead *well*. *They should* greatly honor them, especially those who preach and those who teach. ¹⁸*Long ago Moses* wrote in the Scriptures, "While an ox is threshing *grain*, you must not tie its mouth so that it cannot eat the grain," and *Jesus said*, "People should pay those who work for their benefit." So we know that *congregations should support their elders*.

¹⁹When some person accuses an elder *about doing wrong*, accept what he says only if there are *at least two* or three persons who <testify/say that> *they saw him do that wrong*.

²⁰But as for any *elder* who repeatedly sins, rebuke him before the whole congregation, in order that the rest of *the elders* will be afraid *to sin*.

²¹I solemnly tell you that *as you keep in mind that* God and Christ Jesus and the holy angels know everything that you do, obey these commands *about elders!* *As you consider what others say about an elder doing wrong*, do not easily/quickly decide that what they say is true. And treat them all equally.

²²Do not be in a hurry to put your hands on a man <to set him apart/to appoint him> *as an elder*. *Wait until you have examined him to see how he conducts his life*, because *God will consider* that you are responsible if *you approve* a person who sins, *saying that he should become an elder*. Keep your life pure in every way. ²³*And Timothy*, no longer drink *only* water, but instead, drink a little wine *also*, because *that may help to cure* your stomach's frequent illnesses. ²⁴*I tell you not* <to set apart /appoint> *elders hastily, without seeing how they conduct their lives, because some people sin secretly*, so that it is not known what they have done until after someone examines them (OR, before God judges them). But some people sin openly, so that people know what they have done before anyone examines them. ²⁵Similarly, although some *people* do good deeds openly, with the result that people know what they have done, some people *do good deeds secretly*, yet the good deeds that they have done cannot remain secret either.

1 Timothy 6:1-21

THEME: *Live according to the Christian doctrine and complete what I have commanded.*

6 ¹As for slaves [DOU] *who are believers, teach them that they* should consider that it is right for them to honor their masters in every way. If they do that, people will not speak <against/evil about> God [MTY] and they will not speak <against/evil about> that which *we apostles* teach, *because they will see that the slaves are being respectful of their masters*.

²*Slaves* who have masters who believe *in Christ* must not be disrespectful to their masters just because their masters are fellow believers. Instead, they should serve *their masters* even better because *their masters* are fellow believers whom *God* loves and who benefit when *the slaves* serve them well.

As you teach these things *to your congregation*, exhort/urge *people* that they do them.

³Some people teach things that are different. What they teach <does not agree with/is not like> the correct teaching that our Lord Jesus Christ *taught* (OR, that is about our Lord Jesus Christ). They do not say that we should conduct our lives <in a godly manner/in a manner that pleases God>. ⁴Such people are very proud and do not understand anything [HYP]. Instead, they abnormally/wrongly desire to *argue about unimportant* matters and about certain words. As a result, *people who listen to them* <envy others/desire to have what others have>. They quarrel *with others and with one another*. They say bad things about *others*. They suspect/think that *others* have evil <motives/reasons for doing what they do>. ⁵Their whole way of thinking has become completely wrong *because* they have rejected the true *doctrine/teaching*. As a result, they *mistakenly* think that <by practicing religion/by saying that they believe in God> they will gain a lot of *money*.

⁶*Well*, we truly do gain great *benefit* when we conduct our lives <in a godly manner/in a manner that pleases God> and we are content *with what we have*. ⁷We brought nothing into the world *when we were born*, and we cannot take anything out of it *when we die*, ⁸so if we have food and clothing, we should be satisfied with these. ⁹But some people strongly desire to be rich. As a result, they *do wrong things to get money, and this will cause them to be caught/trapped* [MET] as animals

get caught in traps. They foolishly desire many things, and those desires cause them to get hurt. And God will completely reject *them!*¹⁰ All kinds of bad things will happen to people who [PRS] desire to have a lot of money. Because some people longed for money, they have stopped believing the doctrine/teaching *that all of us believe* and they have caused themselves much grief/sadness.

¹¹ But as for you, who are a man who *serves God*, <keep completely away from such love of money/do not be like the people who love money>. Decide that you will do what is right, and that you will <be godly/do what pleases God>. Decide that you will trust *God*, and that you will love *others*. Endure *difficult circumstances*. Always be gentle *with people*.¹² Try earnestly and with all your energy/strength [MET] to live in accordance with what you believe. *Continue to do your tasks well in order that you will know for sure that you will live eternally*. Remember that *God* chose you to *live with him*, and that when many elders were listening you said strongly <*what you believe/that you trust in Christ*>.

¹³ God, who gives life to all things, knows everything that you do. Christ Jesus also knows everything that you do. He strongly declared what was true when *he was on trial before Pontius Pilate*.¹⁴ I command you that as you keep all that in mind, in every way you <hold fast/obey> what Christ has commanded us [DOU]. <Hold fast/obey> those teachings in a way that our Lord Jesus Christ cannot <criticize you about/say that you did what is wrong>, until he comes again.

¹⁵ Remember that *God* will cause Jesus to come again at the proper time. He is awesome! He is the only Ruler! He rules over all other people who rule!¹⁶ He is the only one who will never die, *and he lives in heaven in light that is so bright that no one can approach it!* He is the one whom no person has ever seen and whom no person is able to see! My desire is that all people will honor him and that he *will rule* powerfully [MTY] forever! <May it be so!/Amen!>

¹⁷ Tell *the believers* who are rich here in this present world that they should not be proud, and that they should not trust in their many *possessions*, because they cannot be certain *how long they will have them*. Teach them that they should not *trust in their wealth*. *Instead, they should trust* in God. He is the one who abundantly gives us everything we have in order that we may enjoy it.¹⁸ Also, tell them that their good deeds must be as plentiful *as their money*. Specifically, they should share very generously with others *what they have*.¹⁹ If they do that, *Jesus will give them a great reward*. *It will be as though they are storing up in heaven* much treasure for themselves that will <be a good *basis on which they may rely* for/result in their> receiving a great reward in the future (OR, which will be as solid as the foundation [MET] *of a house*). By doing this they will have the life that is the real life.

²⁰ Timothy, faithfully proclaim/protect the true message (OR, do the work) that *Jesus* has given *to you*. <Avoid/Do not listen to> *people who want to* chatter about things that are not important to God. <Avoid/Do not listen to> *people who claim/say that they have* 'true knowledge' but who say things that oppose/contradict *our true teaching*.²¹ <Keep completely away from/Reject completely> *such teaching*. Remember that some people who claim *to have this 'knowledge'* have stopped believing what *all of us believe*.

<I desire that/May> *God continue to act* kindly toward you all.

The Apostle Paul wrote letters to his assistants. We call this letter 2 Timothy

2 Timothy 1:1-2

THEME: This letter is from me, Paul, to you, Timothy.

1 ¹ I, Paul, am writing this letter. I am an apostle whom Christ Jesus chose so that I would do what God wanted. He chose me to tell people that God has promised that they will live eternally as a result of their having a close relationship with Christ Jesus. ² I am writing to you, Timothy, whom I love as if you were my own son. I pray that God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord will continue to act kindly to you, be merciful to you, and cause you to have inner peace,

2 Timothy 1:3-5

THEME: I thank God that you sincerely believe in Christ Jesus.

³ I thank God for all that he has done for you. I serve him, and my ancestors served him, too. I serve him in a manner that I know to be right. I thank him while repeatedly I pray for you at night and during the day. ⁴ While I am thanking God for you, I very much want to see you because I remember how you cried [MTY] when we separated. I want to see you in order that I may be <filled with joy/very happy>. ⁵ I thank God because I remember that you sincerely believe in Christ Jesus. First, your grandmother, Lois, and your mother, Eunice, believed in him and, I am <convinced/very sure> that you also believe in him.

2 Timothy 1:6-7

THEME: So I remind you to do fervently what God has enabled and assigned you to do.

⁶ Because I am sure that you believe in him, I remind you to do fervently/wholeheartedly [MET] what God has <assigned for/appointed> you to do and what he has enabled you to do. God <assigned for/appointed> you to do it as a result of my putting my hands on you to show/indicate that he had chosen you to do his work. ⁷ Remember that God has put his Spirit within us. His Spirit does not cause us to be afraid. Instead, he causes us to be powerful to work for God, and he helps us to love others and to control what we say and do.

2 Timothy 1:8-14

THEME: Never be ashamed either of the message or of me, but be willing to endure with me whatever we suffer because we tell the good news.

⁸ So never be ashamed/reluctant to tell others the message about our Lord. And do not be ashamed of me, even though I am a prisoner because I preach about him. Instead, be willing to suffer as I do as you proclaim the message about Christ. Endure what you will suffer by letting God empower you to endure it. ⁹ God saved us and chose us to conduct our lives in a pure way. It was not our doing good deeds/actions that caused him to do this for us—something that we did not deserve. Instead, before <time began/he created the world> he purposed/planned to be kind to us as a result of what Christ Jesus would do for us. ¹⁰ Now, as a result of our Savior Christ Jesus having come, it has been revealed {he has shown} that he acts kindly toward us. Specifically, Christ Jesus has declared that we will not remain dead after we die! He has also revealed that, as a result of our hearing and accepting the message about Christ, we will live forever in bodies that will not decay! ¹¹ I was chosen {Christ chose me} to go as an apostle to many places and proclaim that message to people. ¹² So, even though I suffer here in this prison, I am not ashamed of being here (OR, I am very confident), because I know Christ Jesus, the one whom I have trusted, and I am convinced/sure that he is able to keep safe the good message that he has entrusted to me (OR, the things that I have entrusted to him), and that he will reward me at the time [MTY] when he comes again.

¹³ Be sure that you tell others the same correct message that you heard from me. And as you tell it, keep trusting in Christ Jesus and keep loving others as Christ Jesus enables you to do. ¹⁴ Do not let anyone persuade you to change the good message that God has entrusted/given to you. Allow the Holy Spirit who lives in us to direct what you say.

2 Timothy 1:15-18

THEME: Many people have turned away from me, but Onesiphorus often refreshed me and was not ashamed of me.

¹⁵ You know that almost all the believers in Asia province have <turned away from/abandoned> me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶ But I pray that the Lord will be kind to the family of Onesiphorus for the following reasons: Often he refreshed me and, even though I was a prisoner [MTY], he was not ashamed <of me/to admit he was my friend>. ¹⁷ On the

contrary, when he came *here* to Rome city, he diligently searched for me until he found me. ¹⁸ *I pray that the Lord will be kind to him in that day [MTY] when he, the Lord, will judge people.* And how much Onesiphorus served *me* in Ephesus city, you know very well.

2 Timothy 2:1-2

THEME: *Let God empower you; and entrust the message to loyal/trustworthy people.*

2 ¹ *You are like a son to me.* So I urge also that you *let God* empower you *spiritually* as a result of Christ Jesus acting kindly toward you. ² *As you do that*, remembering that *the message* that you heard from me is the same message that other people have affirmed/declared to you, you must entrust/give that message to people whom you can trust, people who will be competent/able/qualified to teach others.

2 Timothy 2:3-13

THEME: *Endure with me what we suffer for Christ Jesus.*

³ Endure as I do what we suffer for Christ Jesus, like a good soldier *endures what he suffers*. ⁴ *You know that* soldiers, in order to please their captain, do not <become involved in civilian affairs/spend time doing other kinds of work> [MET]. *So, like soldiers, do not let other matters <distract you as you serve/hinder you from serving> Christ Jesus!* ⁵ *Similarly, you know that* athletes who do not obey the rules of the contest will not be given {not win} the prize [MET]. *So, like athletes, do all that Christ Jesus has commanded so that God will reward you!* ⁶ *You also know that* a hard-working farmer should be the first to receive some of the harvest [MET]. *So, like farmers, work hard for Christ Jesus and expect that God will reward you!* ⁷ Think about what I have just written, because, *if you do*, the Lord will enable you to understand everything *that you need to understand*. ⁸ *Endure everything* by remembering how Jesus Christ *endured it when he suffered*. Remember that he was raised {God raised him} from the dead and *God affirmed/declared him to be king* as his ancestor *King David* was. Those are things that I tell to people when I tell them the message *about Christ*. ⁹ I am suffering *here in prison* because *some people oppose* the good message *that I tell*. They have even put me in chains as if I were a criminal. Nevertheless, the message from God is not chained {nothing is preventing [MET] *others from proclaiming* the message from God}. ¹⁰ Therefore I *willingly endure all that I am suffering* for the sake of those *whom God has chosen*. *I do this* in order that Christ Jesus will save them, too, and that they will be forever with *him in the glorious place where he is*. ¹¹ *Endure everything as you remember* that these words *that we all say/sing* (OR, *that we teach people*) *are trustworthy*,

Since *we have stopped behaving as we did in the past*,
and *now are acting as though* we died when he died,
we shall also live with him.

¹² Since we are also patiently enduring *what we suffer*,
we shall also rule with him.

But if we say that we do not *know him*,
he also will say that he does not *know us*.

¹³ If we <are unfaithful/stop doing what he tells us to do>,
he will *treat us just like he promised to do*,
because he <can never be untrue to himself/always does what he says that he will do>.

2 Timothy 2:14-15

THEME: *Remind teachers about the things that I have told you and charge them not to quarrel; and be sure that you yourself are the kind of person that God will approve of.*

¹⁴ *Those whom you appointed to teach others God's truth*, keep reminding them about these things that *I have told you*. Tell them strongly that, since God knows what they are doing (OR, that *God will judge them for everything that is wrong that they do, and therefore*) they must not quarrel <about words/about matters that are not important>, *because, when teachers quarrel, it helps no one, and because, when they quarrel, they spiritually* destroy those who hear them (OR, they cause those who hear *them* to quit <being committed to Christ/believing in Christ>.)

¹⁵ <Do your best/Try hard> to be the kind of person that God will approve of. *Be like* a good workman as you teach the true message accurately. If a workman works well, he will not need to be ashamed of (OR, will be pleased about) *what he does*.

2 Timothy 2:16-19

THEME: *Have nothing to do with godless and foolish talk.*

¹⁶ <Stay away from/Do not talk with> *those who talk foolishly and <godlessly/say things that displease God>*, because *those who talk foolishly* will become even more <ungodly/displeasing to God>, ¹⁷ and *because* their message will *harm people* [SIM] like gangrene/cancer does. *You know* Hymenaeus and Philetus. They are *two* such people *who talk in this manner*. ¹⁸ *Specifically*, they teach a wrong message; *that is*, they say *wrongly that God will not raise the dead people* because he has already given us *spiritual* life. *They claim that our spiritual life is the only new life that we will receive.* By

saying that, they cause some people ¹⁹not to continue to believe *in Christ*. However, *the congregations of God are strong* [MET]. *They are like* a strong foundation on which is written: "The Lord knows the people who really belong to him," and "Every person who calls Jesus [MTY] 'Lord' must stop doing wicked deeds".

2 Timothy 2:20-22

THEME: *Avoid the bad things that some young people desire to do. Do good instead.*

²⁰ In a wealthy person's house there are not only utensils made of gold and of silver, but also utensils made of wood and of clay. The gold and silver *utensils are used* at special occasions/events, and the others are used at ordinary occasions. Similarly, in a congregation there are those who *<are ready/desire>* to do great things for the Lord Jesus, and there are those like the teachers of false doctrines/teachings who are not. ²¹ Therefore, those who rid themselves of *what is evil in their lives* will be able to work well for the Lord. They will be like utensils [MET] used at special occasions, set apart for and especially useful to the owner of the big house. They will be like fine utensils that have been prepared {are ready} to do any kind of good work. ²² Because of that, you(sg) must avoid doing the wrong actions that many young people desire to do. Instead, you must earnestly do right actions, believe *the true teaching*, love *God and others*, and you must continually be at peace with those who ask the Lord to help them and who are pure in every way (OR, who serve Jesus faithfully).

2 Timothy 2:23-26

THEME: *Do not discuss foolish questions but gently instruct those who oppose the true message.*

²³ Do not talk with anyone who foolishly wants to argue about matters that are not important. Do not talk with them, because you know that when people talk about foolish things, they begin to quarrel. ²⁴ But those who serve the Lord must not quarrel. Instead, they should be kind to all people, they should be *<able to teach God's truth well/good teachers>*, and they should be patient with people. ²⁵ That is, they should gently instruct/teach people who oppose the true message. They should do that in order that perhaps God will cause others to completely change what they think, so that they may acknowledge/believe the true message. ²⁶ In that way they may get free from what is like [MET] a trap set by the devil. The devil has deceived them in order that they might do what he wants them to do.

2 Timothy 3:1-9

THEME: *Realize that evil people will cause the last days to be difficult. Avoid such people.*

3 ¹ You need to realize that during the last days [MTY] before Christ returns, evil people will make it difficult for believers to behave as they should. ² This is because such evil people will be habitually loving themselves and loving money. They will habitually boast about themselves, they will be proud, and will often say bad things about others. They will disobey their parents. They will not be thankful, nor will they respect anything that is good. ³ They will not even love their own family, nor agree with anybody (OR, they never forgive anyone). They will tell lies about people. They will not control what they say and do, nor allow anyone to control them. They will not love anything that is good. ⁴ They will *<betray others/hand others over to their enemies>* and act foolishly. They will be overly/very proud of themselves, and they will love to please themselves instead of loving God. ⁵ And, although they will pretend that they worship God, they will not let God's Spirit work powerfully in their lives. Do not associate with such people (OR, Do not let such people join your congregation), ⁶ because some such people, even now, subtly/deceivingly persuade foolish women to let them come into their houses, and then they deceive those women so that they control what those women think. These women have been burdened with sins {have sinned very much} and they have been led to do {they do} the many evil things that they strongly desire to do. ⁷ Even though they are always wanting to learn new things, they are never able to recognize what is true. ⁸ Just like Jannes and Jambres long ago very much opposed Moses, so also some people now oppose the true message. Those people think only what is evil. God rejects them because they do not believe what is true. ⁹ Nevertheless, they will not continue to succeed, because most [HYP] people will understand clearly that such people are foolish, just like people also realized clearly that Jannes and Jambres were foolish.

2 Timothy 3:10-17

THEME: *Continue to believe what you have learned and been assured of.*

¹⁰ But as for yourself, you have fully known what I have taught. You have known and imitated the way in which I conducted my life, and what I have been trying to do. You have trusted God as I have. You have been patient as I have been. You have loved people as I have and you have endured as you suffered like I have suffered. ¹¹ You know how I endured many times when people harmed me. They caused me to suffer at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra cities. But although they caused me to suffer, I endured it; and every time they did those things to me, the Lord rescued me. ¹² *<Indeed/You know that>*, for us(inc) who want to live *<in a godly manner/in a manner that pleases God>*, we will always be persecuted {there will always be people who will cause us to suffer} because we have a close relationship with Christ Jesus. ¹³ Evil people (OR, And those) who deceive other people will *<get worse/teach things that are more and more wrong>*. Specifically, they will deceive other people, and those who hear them will deceive others. ¹⁴ But you, in contrast, must continue to believe what you have learned and *<been assured of/firmly believe>*. I know that you are confident/sure that it is true because you know that you have learned it from all of us who taught you *<God's truth/what is right>*. ¹⁵ From the time when you were a

child you have known the holy writings/Scriptures. *You now know that they enabled you to become wise so that God saved you because of your believing in Christ Jesus.* ¹⁶ God <inspired/put into men's minds> everything *that is written* in the Scriptures {they wrote in the holy writings}, and those writings are all useful to teach *us what is true*, to cause us to know *when we are wrong* and then <to correct us/to show us what we have done that is wrong>, and to train/teach us to do what is right. ¹⁷ *What is written* {they wrote} is useful to help us who serve God to be ready/prepared to do all that we should do. By means of it, we are equipped {God gives us what we need} in order to do every *kind of* good deeds.

2 Timothy 4:1-8

THEME: *I solemnly charge you to preach the true message and do everything that you ought to do.*

4 ¹ Christ Jesus *is going to come back and judge* those who are living *when he comes* and those who will have died. He will judge them *concerning what rewards they deserve*, and he will rule everyone. So, *knowing that* he and God are watching *everything that we do*, I solemnly/earnestly command you ² that you proclaim the *true* message to people. Always be ready/prepared *to proclaim it* whether people want to hear it or not. *Some people are saying things that are not correct*; <refute their teaching/show why their teaching is wrong>. Rebuke them when they are doing wrong. Tell them what they ought to do. Be very patient while you teach them. ³ *Do these things* because there will be a time when people will not listen to good teaching. Instead, they will bring in many teachers for themselves who will tell them just what they want to hear [IDM]. *The reason that they will bring in such teachers is* that they want to do the evil things that they desire. ⁴ That is, they will not listen to [MTY] what is true, but will listen instead *to strange* stories from our ancestors. ⁵ *Furthermore, I command that* you always control what you think and do. *Be willing* to endure hardships/suffering. Your work should be telling people the message *about Christ Jesus*. As you serve *the Lord*, do everything that *God has told* you to do.

⁶ *Timothy, I say these things to you* because as for **me**, *it is as though* [MET] *they are now about to kill me*. *It is as though my blood will be poured out* {they will kill me} *as a sacrifice on the altar*; that is, *I know* that it is the time for me to die [EUP]. ⁷ *And as to telling people the good message and defending it*, I have <exerted myself thoroughly/done it with all my energy>, [MET] *like a boxer does*. *As to doing* the work that God gave me to do, I have completed it, *like a runner who finishes* [MET] the race. *As to what we believe*, I <have been loyal to it/continue to believe it>. ⁸ *So, like they award a prize* [MET] *to the winner of a race*, the Lord, who judges rightly, will give me a reward *because I have lived* righteously. He will give me that reward when [MTY] *he judges people*. And not only *will he reward* me, but he will also reward all those who very much want him to come back.

2 Timothy 4:9-15

THEME: *Do your best to come to me soon.*

⁹ <Do your best/Try hard> to come to me soon. ¹⁰ *I say that* because Demas has left me. He wanted very much *the good things that he might enjoy* [MTY] in this world *right now*, and so he went to Thessalonica *city*. Crescens went to Galatia *province*, and Titus went to Dalmatia *district*. ¹¹ Luke is the only one who is still with me *of those who were helping me*. *And when you come*, bring Mark with you, because he is useful to help me in my work. ¹² Tychicus *cannot help me because* I sent him to Ephesus *city*. ¹³ *And when you come*, bring the coat that I left with Carpus in Troas *city*. Also, bring the books, but <most of all/especially> *I want* <the parchments/the animal skins> *on which important things are written*.

¹⁴ Alexander, the man who makes things from metal, did many evil/harmful things to me. The Lord will punish him for what he did. ¹⁵ So you, too, must beware of him. *He will try to destroy your work if he can*, because he very much opposes the message that we *proclaim*.

2 Timothy 4:16-18

THEME: *The Lord will rescue me from everything that is evil and bring me safely to heaven.*

¹⁶ When I first defended myself *in court here*, no one came along *to help defend* me. Instead, they all left me. *I pray* that it will not be counted against {God will forgive} them [LIT] *for leaving me*. ¹⁷ Nevertheless, the Lord was with me and strengthened me. He enabled me to fully preach the message, and all the non-Jewish people *in the court* (OR, people from many nations) heard it. And I was rescued *by the Lord* {the Lord rescued me} *from great danger*, *as if I were taken* [MET] out of a lion's (OR, wild animal's) mouth. ¹⁸ *Therefore, I am sure that* the Lord will rescue me from everything that is truly evil and will bring me safely to heaven, where he rules. Praise him forever! <Amen!/May it be so!>

2 Timothy 4:19-22

THEME: *Greet my friends there. Your friends here greet you. May the Lord bless you.*

¹⁹ Greet for me Priscilla and *her husband* Aquila and the family of Onesiphorus. ²⁰ Erastus stayed in Corinth *city*. Trophimus, I left in Miletus *city* because he was sick. ²¹ <Do your best/Try hard> to come to me before <the stormy season/winter>. Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and many other fellow believers *in this city* <send their greetings to/say that they are

thinking affectionately about you. ²² *I pray that the Lord will help you in your spirit, Timothy, and that he will act kindly toward all of you believers who are there.*

The Apostle Paul wrote letters to his assistants. We call this letter Titus

Titus 1:1-4

THEME: I, Paul, have been appointed by God as his servant and as an apostle of Jesus Christ in order that I might lead God's people to know, believe, and practice the true teachings. I write this letter to you, Titus. May God continue to bless you.

1 ¹I, Paul, am writing this letter to you, Titus. God appointed me to be his servant and to be an apostle who represents Jesus Christ. God appointed me in order that I might teach those whom God has chosen to be his people to correctly believe in him. He wants me to teach them the true teachings about God, in order that they will learn to behave <in a godly manner/in a manner that pleases God>. ²As a result of my doing these things, they confidently expect that God will cause them to live forever. God, who never lies, promised before he created the world that his people would live forever. ³Then at the time that he chose, he revealed to us his message. Specifically, God our Savior gave this message to me, and he trusted me to proclaim it to people. ⁴Titus, I am writing this letter to you because you are like a true son [MET] to me because I led/helped you to believe the same teachings about Christ that I do. <I pray that God our Father and Christ Jesus our Savior will/May God our Father and Christ our Savior> continue to act kindly toward you and cause you to have inner peace.

Titus 1:5

THEME: I want you to teach the believers and to appoint elders.

⁵When I asked you to stay on Crete island, I wanted you to do these things: Teach the believers what they need to know so that they can understand correctly the spiritual matters about which some are teaching wrongly. Appoint elders in the congregation in each town in the manner in which I told you to do.

Titus 1:6-9

THEME: Appoint as elders men whom no one can justly criticize.

⁶When you appoint men as elders, you must choose men whom no one can justly accuse of habitually doing what is wrong (OR, whom everyone speaks well of). Specifically, appoint men who have been faithful to their wives. Appoint men whose children faithfully obey them. Do not appoint men whose children habitually do all the things that their bodies urge them to do, or who refuse to obey their parents. ⁷Leaders of the congregation must be men who, as everyone knows, habitually do what is good (OR, whom no one can justly accuse of doing what is wrong), because it is on God's behalf that they will direct/serve the congregation. Specifically, they must not be arrogant/proud. They must not easily become angry. They must not be men who drink much alcohol. They must not be men who <act violently/fight> when they are angry. They must not be men who are <greedy for/strongly desire to get> money. ⁸Instead, they must be ones who welcome and take care of guests. They must <be devoted to/like to do> what is good. They must do what God considers to be right. They must be <holy/completely dedicated to God>. They must be men who do what their minds tell them is right to do and not what their emotions/desires urge them to do. ⁹They must firmly believe in the message about Jesus Christ exactly as I/we(inc) taught it, in order that they might be able to teach the believers what is correct and to urge them to follow it well. If they firmly accept our message, they will be able to convince those who oppose what is correct that they are wrong.

Titus 1:10-16

THEME: Since there are many deceivers teaching what is false, who do not even know God themselves and are unable to do any good thing, rigorously convince those believers who follow false teachings that they are wrong in order that they will firmly believe in the correct teachings.

¹⁰I say this because there are many people who oppose the correct teachings. They refuse to obey people who have authority over them, they talk <on and on/without stopping>, saying what helps no one, and they deceive people. The Jewish believers [MTY] who insist we must obey all the Jewish rituals are especially doing this. ¹¹You and the leaders whom you appoint should prevent such people from teaching the believers. They are causing whole families to stop believing in the correct teachings [MET] by means of their teaching people wrong ideas/teachings. They are teaching people only in order that people will give them money, which is very shameful for them to do. ¹²A man from Crete island whom they consider a prophet said, "My fellow Cretan people are always lying to one another! They are like dangerous wild animals [MET]! They are lazy and always eat too much food [SYN]!" ¹³The words that this man said about the Cretan people are still true, especially about their being liars. So, rigorously convince/show those Cretan believers that those false teachings are wrong. Tell them to firmly believe in the correct teachings. ¹⁴Teach them that they should no longer listen to

the stories that the Jews <made up/invented>. *Especially* they should refuse to obey those who reject our true teachings, because those people are teaching things that only come from human beings, *not from God*. ¹⁵ *Believers should reject what they teach about food, because no food that we eat can make us unacceptable to God if we are pure in our <inner beings/hearts>*. But if people are evil *within themselves* and they do not trust *in Christ Jesus*, there is no *ritual* that can make them acceptable to God. Such people's way of thinking has been ruined {Such people have ruined their way of thinking}, and they do not even feel guilty *when they do what is evil*. ¹⁶ Even though they claim/say that they know God, by what they do they *show that they do not know <God/his true teaching>*. They do not obey *God*, and they are unable to do anything that he considers to be good. *So God considers them to be absolutely disgusting!*

Titus 2:1-10

THEME: *Teach and urge the believers to behave in a manner that is consistent with the correct teachings in order that people will perceive that the teachings about God our Savior are very good.*

2 ¹ But as for you(sg), teach *the believers* what agrees with the correct teachings. ² *Specifically, tell* the older men that they should control themselves <in all situations/whatever happens>, *that they should behave in such a manner* that all people will respect them, and that they should control what they say and do. And tell them that they should firmly believe in the correct teachings, that they should sincerely love others, and that they should always be steadfast. ³ Similarly, *tell* the older women that they should behave <in a reverent manner that shows that they are devoted to God/in a manner that honors God>; *specifically, they should not <slander others/talk evil about others>*, and they should not <be drinking much/habitually drinking> *alcohol*. Tell them that they should teach *the younger women* what is good, ⁴ in order that they may love their husbands and love their children. ⁵ They should teach them to control what they say and do and to be pure in every way, to be good workers at home and submissive to their own husbands. *The younger women should behave like this* in order that no one will speak against the message about God. ⁶ As for the younger men, similarly, urge them to control themselves *in all that they say and do*. ⁷ You yourself must continually do what is good in order that others will see how they should behave. Teach *the believers* sincerely and seriously; ⁸ teach what is correct and what no one can *justly* criticize. *Do this* in order that *when the believers conduct their lives in a proper manner*, anyone who opposes <us/our message> will be disappointed because there will be nothing bad that they can *justly* say about us. ⁹ As for slaves, *specifically, urge them* to be submissive to their masters in everything. They should please *their masters*; *specifically, they should not <contradict/refuse to obey> their masters*. ¹⁰ They should not steal *things that belong to their masters*. Instead, they should always be completely honest/reliable and thus *show their masters that their masters can completely trust them*. They should behave like this in order that *as a result of all the slaves conducting themselves well, people* will realize that the teachings about God our Savior are very desirable.

Titus 2:11-14

THEME: *God very kindly sent Jesus Christ to earth in order that God might save all people and God graciously trains us to behave in a godly manner.*

¹¹ *The believers should behave in a good manner*, since God did for us what we did not deserve, *sending Jesus Christ to earth* in order that he might save all people [PRS]. ¹² God teaches/tells us [PRS] how to stop doing what he dislikes, and to stop desiring the things that <ungodly people/people who habitually do things that do not please God> desire [MTY]. He wants us to control our behavior and to do what is right and to do what pleases him while we live in this present age/time. ¹³ *Do not forget that* we are waiting expectantly for that which will make us very happy *indeed* [MTY]! We are expectantly waiting for our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, to come gloriously! ¹⁴ He is the one who *willingly* gave himself <to die/as a sacrifice> on our behalf to set us free from all sinful behavior! He wants <us to get rid of all our evil behavior/to make our lives pure> [MET]. He wants us, who are his very own people, to be *people who* are eager to do what is good.

Titus 2:15

THEME: *With full authority, teach these things, urge the believers to do them, and correct those believers who do not follow them.*

¹⁵ Teach *the believers* these things! Urge *them to do them!* Correct *those who do not obey them!* As you do this, you have my full authority; so do not allow anyone to disregard you!

Titus 3:1-2

THEME: *Remind the believers to act appropriately toward authorities and kindly toward everyone.*

3 ¹ Remind *the believers* that they should submit to all those who rule them or have authority over them, and that they should obey them. They should be ready to do anything that is helpful. ² They should never say bad things about anyone, they should not quarrel with people, they should be patient *when others <irritate them/do things that they do not like>*, and *they should* always treat all people as important.

Titus 3:3-7

THEME: *God acted kindly toward us and mercifully saved us, even though formerly we were behaving sinfully.*

³ Remind your congregations about these things because formerly we *believers* ourselves were also foolish, just like *all people who do not believe in Christ are now*. We did not obey *<God/God's message>*. We *let* others deceive us. We *<spent all our time doing/continually did>* what is evil and could not stop ourselves from doing all the things that our bodies liked [DOU]. We were *<envying others/desiring to have what others have>*. We were causing people to hate us and we were hating one another. ⁴⁻⁵ Even though we were behaving sinfully like this, he saved us! God our Savior *acted* kindly and lovingly to us [PRS], *and saved us!* He did this, not because we did things that are right, but just because he *wanted to be* merciful to us! He washed us *inwardly and gave* us a new way of living as a result of the Holy Spirit changing us inwardly. ⁶ *Because we trusted in* Jesus Christ our Savior, God put the Holy Spirit within us *in order to* wonderfully *change us*. ⁷ He wanted to erase the record of our sins even though we did not deserve that, and he wanted us to receive all that *God desires* to give us. *These are the things that we* confidently expect to receive when we live *with him* eternally.

Titus 3:8a

THEME: *I want you to confidently teach this trustworthy message to the believers in order that they will be constantly concerned with doing what is good for others.*

⁸ These words that *I* have said are trustworthy. So, I want you to confidently teach the things *that I have written about in this letter* to those who have trusted in God, in order that they will be constantly devoted/attempting to do deeds that are good and helpful for others.

Titus 3:8b-11

THEME: *Have nothing to do with foolish disputes about genealogies and about the Jewish law; and do not allow divisive people who have turned away from the true teachings to influence the believers.*

These *teachings* are beneficial and profitable for *all* people, ⁹ but there are people who foolishly dispute/argue *with you*, wanting you to believe senseless *<myths/stories that came from your ancestors>*, stories in which there are *<genealogies/lists of your ancestors' names>*. They argue and quarrel *with you*, *<insisting/telling you>* that you must obey the *Jewish* laws. *<Keep completely away from/Do not talk with>* them, because *arguing about such things* is not profitable for anyone. *It is completely* worthless! ¹⁰ Those people, *by teaching things that are false*, are causing others *<to turn away from/to quit believing>* the true teachings. You must warn them *that God will judge them if they continue doing that*. *If they do not stop*, warn them one more time. *If they still do not stop*, then no longer allow them to *influence the believers*. ¹¹ You will know *clearly* that such persons have *deliberately <turned away from/quit believing and obeying>* the true teachings. They know that they are doing what is sinful, *but they deliberately keep on doing it*.

Titus 3:12-14

THEME: *Make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis. Help Zenas and Apollos on their journey. All the believers should likewise learn to devote themselves to doing good deeds for people who especially need help.*

¹² I expect to send either Artemas or Tychicus to you. *As soon as one of them arrives*, *<make every effort/try hard>* to come to me *quickly* at Nicopolis city, because it is there that I have decided to go *and stay* during the stormy/winter season. ¹³ As for Zenas *<the lawyer/the expert in the law>* and Apollos, *when they are ready to leave Crete Island*, help them as much as you can in order that they may have everything [LIT] that *they need as they travel*. ¹⁴ Moreover, our *fellow believers* also should learn *<to devote themselves to doing/to constantly do>* good deeds *for people* who need help in order that they, our fellow believers, will live very useful [LIT] lives.

Titus 3:15

THEME: *Everyone who is with me greets you and the other true believers there. May our Lord Jesus Christ continue to act kindly toward all of you.*

¹⁵ *As I finish this letter*, everyone who is with me *<says that they are thinking affectionately about you/wants me to send greetings to you>*. Tell those who are *there* who love us and believe *as we do* that we *<are thinking affectionately about/greet>* them. I pray/desire that our Lord Jesus Christ will continue to act kindly toward all of you.

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to a friend. We call this letter Philemon

Philemon 1-3

THEME: I, Paul, am writing this letter to you, Philemon, and to those with you. May God bless you(pl).

¹ I, Paul, am a prisoner *who serves* Christ Jesus. *I am here* with Timothy, our fellow believer. *I am writing this letter to you, Philemon, our dear friend and fellow worker.* ² *I am also writing to your wife, Apphia, and to Archippus, who is like [MET] our fellow soldier because he serves Christ steadfastly together with us.* I am also *writing this* to the congregation *that meets/gathers* in your(sg) house. ³ *I pray that God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ will continue to act kindly toward you all and will continue to cause you to have inner peace.*

Philemon 4-7

THEME: I thank God and rejoice greatly because you have shown that you love God's people.

⁴ I always thank my God when I pray for you(sg), because I hear *people say that* you love all God's people [CHI] ⁵ and that you continue to trust in the Lord Jesus. ⁶ I pray that as a result of your knowing all the good things *that God/Christ has done* for us, you may *◀be effective/influence many others▶* as you tell others what you believe, in order that *they may honor* Christ. ⁷ I have rejoiced greatly and have been greatly encouraged because you, my dear friend, have acted lovingly toward God's people by encouraging them [SYN].

Philemon 8-11

THEME: Because I know that you love God's people, I request, rather than command you, to do what you ought to do for my spiritual son Onesimus.

⁸ So *I have a request/favor to ask of you.* I am completely confident *that I have authority* to command you *to do* what you ought to do, because *I am an apostle of Christ.* ⁹ But because *I know that you love God's people,* I request this instead of *commanding you to do it.* It is I, Paul, an old man and now also a prisoner *because I serve* Christ Jesus, *who am requesting it.* ¹⁰ I request that you *do something* for someone *who has become like* my own son *because I told him about Christ* [MET] while *I have been* a prisoner [MTY] *here. His name is* Onesimus. ¹¹ Although *his name, as you know, means 'useful',* formerly he was useless to you. But now he is useful both to you and to me!

Philemon 12-16

THEME: I am sending Onesimus back to you. He is as dear to me as my own self, and he will now be even dearer to you than he is to me.

¹² Although *◀he is as dear to me as/I love him as much as I love▶* [MET] my own self [MTY], I am sending him back to you. ¹³ I would like to have kept him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf, while I am a prisoner [MTY] *because of my preaching* the message *about Christ.* ¹⁴ Nevertheless, because *I had not yet asked you and you had not yet permitted me to keep him here with me,* I decided not to *keep him here. I decided that I should* not do anything without your permitting it. *I decided that you should help me only if you really want to help me.* ¹⁵ Perhaps the reason that *God permitted* Onesimus to be separated from {to leave} you for a little while was that *he would believe in Christ, and as a result* you would have him *◀back/with you▶* forever! ¹⁶ *You will no longer have him only as a slave. Instead, you will have him as someone who is more than a slave. You will have him as a fellow believer!* He is especially dear to me, but he certainly will be more dear to you *than he is to me* (OR, I love him very much, but you will certainly love him more than I do), *because now he not only belongs to you but he also belongs to the Lord.*

Philemon 17-19

THEME: If you consider me to be your partner, receive Onesimus as you would receive me. I guarantee to repay you whatever Onesimus owes you.

¹⁷ So, if you consider me to be your partner *in God's work,* receive him as you would receive me. ¹⁸ If he has wronged you in any manner or if he owes you anything, *◀charge that to me/tell me so that I can pay you▶.* ¹⁹ *I, Paul, am now writing this in my own handwriting: I will repay you what he owes you, although I might mention to*

you that you owe me even more than Onesimus may owe you, because it was the result of my telling you about Christ that God saved <your soul/you>.

Philemon 20

THEME: Please encourage me in this matter as you encourage other believers in Christ.

²⁰ <Yes/I say it again>, my dear friend, because you and I both have a relationship with the Lord, I want you to do this for me. Encourage me [SYN] *by receiving Onesimus kindly, just like you encourage others who believe in Christ.*

Philemon 21

THEME: I have written this letter to you confident of your compliance with my request.

²¹ I have written *this letter* to you, confident that you will do what I am requesting you to *do*. *In fact*, I know that you will do even more than what I am requesting *you to do*.

Philemon 22

THEME: Also, keep a guest room ready for me.

²² Also, keep a guest room ready for me *to stay in*, because I confidently expect that as a result of your prayers *for me*, I will be released *from prison and will come to you all*.

Philemon 23-25

THEME: My other fellow workers greet you(sg). May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you(pl) spiritually.

²³ Epaphras, who is *suffering* with me in prison because of *his serving* Christ Jesus, <sends his greetings to you/wants you to know that he is thinking fondly about you>. ²⁴ Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, who are my *other* fellow workers, also <send their greetings to you/want you to know that they are thinking fondly about you>. ²⁵ *I pray that* the Lord Jesus Christ *will* <continue to work kindly in all your lives/kindly keep accomplishing what he desires within you>.

The letter that was written to Jewish believers. We call this letter Hebrews

Hebrews 1:1-3

THEME: God formerly communicated with us through the prophets, but now he has communicated with us through his son, who is just like God.

1 ¹ Long ago God communicated frequently to our ancestors in various ways by what the prophets *wrote*. ² But now when this final age *is beginning*, God has communicated to us *just once* by means of what *◀his Son/the man who was also God▶ said and did*. God appointed him in order that he would possess everything *that truly belongs to God*. God also appointed him in order that he would create the universe. ³ He manifests God's glory. He exactly represents *what God is like*. He *◀sustains everything/carries everything forward to its proper goal▶* by means of his powerful words. When he had *enabled people to be freed from the guilt of their sins* [MET], he sat down in heaven [EUP] *to rule* at the place of highest honor [MTY] with God [MTY].

Hebrews 1:4-14

THEME: God's son is greater than the angels.

⁴ By doing that he *showed that he* was very much greater than the angels, to the extent that his relationship [MTY] *to God, as his Son*, is more excellent than the relationship the angels *have to God*. ⁵ *We know that* because *in the Scriptures* no one [RHQ] ever reported that God said to any angel *what he said to his Son*,

You(sg) are my Son!

Today I have declared to all that I am your Father [DOU]!

And he said in another Scripture passage,

I will be his Father,

and he will be my Son [DOU].

⁶ And *we know his Son is greater than the angels because in another Scripture passage someone wrote this about God's esteemed Son*, when God was about to send him into the world,
All God's angels must worship him.

⁷ *And in the Scriptures it is written that* someone said this about the angels:

God makes the *angels* servants, sometimes as winds and sometimes as flames of fire.

⁸ But on the other hand, *in the Scriptures it is written that God said this to his Son*:

You(sg) who are *also* God will rule forever [MTY],

and you will reign righteously over your kingdom [MTY].

⁹ You have appreciated *people's* righteous *deeds* and you have punished severely *the people who do lawless deeds*.

So I, your God, have caused you to be more joyful [MTY] than anyone else.

¹⁰ And *we also know that his Son is superior to angels because in the Scriptures the Psalmist wrote that* someone said to God's Son,

Lord, it was you who created the earth in the beginning.

You also made *the rest of* the universe (OR, the *things in* the sky) [MTY].

¹¹ Those things will perish, but you will keep on living *forever*.

They will wear out as clothing *wears out*.

¹² You will dispose of them as one rolls up an *old coat to get rid of it*.

Then, you will exchange *all that is in the universe for something new*,

as someone puts on a new garment *in exchange for an old garment* [SIM].

But you *are not like what you created*.

You stay the same, and you live forever [LIT]!

¹³ *We also know that his Son is superior to angels because no one ever stated* [RHQ] *in the Scriptures that* God said to any angel *what he said to his Son*,

Sit next to me and rule with me [MTY]

while I put all of your enemies completely under your control [MET]!

¹⁴ *◀The angels are only spirits who serve God./Are not the angels only spirits who serve God?▶* [RHQ] *God sends them to earth* in order to help us people who will receive what *he will give to us* whom he has saved (OR, us whom he will save).

Hebrews 2:1-4

THEME: We will not escape God's punishment if we ignore such a great message of salvation.

2 ¹ So, *since that is true*, we must pay very great attention to what we have heard *about God's Son*, in order that we do not drift away from it, *as a boat drifts off its course when people do not guide it* [MET]. ² *God's laws that were spoken by angels were valid*, and God justly punished all who transgressed them and all who disobeyed [DOU] them. ³ So, *we will certainly not escape God punishing us if we ignore such a great message about how God* [MTY] *saves us!/how can we escape God punishing us if we ignore such a great message about how God* [MTY] *saves us?>* [RHQ] This *new message* was first spoken by the Lord *Jesus* {The Lord *Jesus* first spoke this *message*}. Then it was confirmed to us by those who heard *what the Lord told them* {those who heard *what the Lord told them* confirmed it to us}. ⁴ God also confirmed to us *that this message was true by enabling believers to do many things that showed God's power, to do other miraculous things* [DOU], and *to do other things* by the gifts that the Holy Spirit distributed to them according to what *God* desired.

Hebrews 2:5-9a

THEME: God has determined that Christ, not angels or people, will rule everything.

⁵ God has not determined that the angels will rule over everything. *Instead, he has determined that Christ will rule in the new world that God will create. That is the new world* about which I am writing. ⁶ Someone spoke to *God about this* somewhere *in the Scriptures*, saying,

◀No one is worthy enough for you to think about him!/Who is *worthy enough* for you to think about him?> [RHQ]

◀No human is *worthy enough* for you to care for him!/Is any human *worthy enough* for you to care for him?> [RHQ]

⁷ *So it is surprising that you have caused people to be for a little while inferior in rank to angels.*

You have greatly honored [DOU] them [MET], as *kings are honored with a crown*.

⁸ You have put everything under their control [MET].

God has determined that people will rule over everything [LIT]. That *means that nothing will be omitted from their control*. But now, at this present time, we perceive that people do not yet have authority over everything. ⁹ But we do know about *Jesus, who truly has authority over everything!*

Hebrews 2:9b-13

THEME: Jesus, the creator of everything, is the one who died for us, makes us holy, and proclaims us to be his brothers and sisters.

Jesus, for a little, while became inferior *in rank* to angels in order to die on behalf of [MET] everyone. He became inferior when he suffered *and* died, as God in his kindness *planned*. But now he has been greatly *honored* [DOU] *by being crowned as kings are*. ¹⁰ It was fitting that *God* make *Jesus* ◀perfect/all that God intended him to be>. He was enabling many people who would belong to him [MET] to share his glory. *God is the one who* created all things, and *he is the one* for whom all things *exist*. *He perfected Jesus* by causing him to suffer *and die*. *Jesus* is the one who enables *God* to save people. ¹¹ *Jesus*, the one who ◀makes people holy/sets people apart for God>, and the ones who are ◀made holy/set apart for God> {whom he ◀makes holy/sets apart for God>}, all belong to God's family. *As a result, Christ* gladly [LIT] proclaims them to be *like his own brothers and sisters*. ¹² *The Psalmist wrote what Christ said to God about us becoming his brothers, in these words,*

I will proclaim to my brothers how awesome you are (OR, what you ◀are like/have done>) [MTY].

I will sing praise to you in the midst of the congregation!

¹³ And a prophet wrote *in another Scripture passage what Christ said about God,*

I will trust him.

And in another *Scripture passage, Christ said about those who are like his children,*

I and the ones that God has given me are here.

Hebrews 2:14-18

THEME: It is Jesus, not angels, who became a human to help us as our high priest.

¹⁴ So, since those *whom God calls his children* are all human beings [MTY], *Jesus* also became a human being *just like them*. The devil has the power to cause people *to be afraid* to die, but *Christ* became human in order that by his dying he might make the devil powerless. ¹⁵ *Jesus did that* to free all of us who are like slaves [MET] all the time we live, because we are *forced to be afraid to die*. ¹⁶ Because *Jesus became a human being*, it is not angels that he wants to help. No, it is we who trust God as Abraham did whom he wants to help. ¹⁷ So, *since he came to help humans, not angels*, he had to be made exactly like *us whom he calls* his own brothers *and sisters*. He wants to be a high priest who *acts mercifully to all people* and who acts faithfully in God's matters, so that people who had sinned would no longer be guilty. ¹⁸ *Specifically*, he is able to help those/us who are tempted *to sin*. He can do that because he suffered, and he was also tempted *to sin like we are tempted to sin*.

Hebrews 3:1-6

THEME: Our high priest, Jesus, deserves more honor than Moses does.

3 ¹ My fellow believers, *God* has set you apart and has chosen you, just like he chose me. So consider Jesus. *He is God's* messenger to us. He is also the high priest whom we say we believe in. ² He faithfully *served God*, who appointed him, just like Moses faithfully *served God's* people [MTY]. ³⁻⁴ Just like every house is made by someone {as someone makes every house}, Jesus made everything, and he is God/Divine. So God has considered that Jesus is worthy *that people honor* him more than they honor Moses, just like the one who builds a house deserves that people honor him more than they should honor the house *he built*. ⁵ Moses very faithfully *served God as he* <helped/cares for> [MET] God's people, just like a servant *faithfully serves his master*. The result was that Moses testified about what Jesus would say later. ⁶ But Christ *faithfully serves God as he* <helps/cares for> his own people [MTY, MET], just like a *son helps/cares for his own family*. And we are God's people [MTY] if we continue to confidently *believe in Christ* and if we continue to proudly wait for *what God will do for us*.

Hebrews 3:7-11

THEME: Do not stubbornly rebel against God as their Jewish ancestors did.

⁷ The Holy Spirit *caused the Psalmist to write these words in the Scriptures*:

Now, when you(*pl*) hear God speaking to you [MTY], ⁸ do not stubbornly <*disobey/refuse to obey him*> [IDM], *as the Israelites stubbornly disobeyed him* when they rebelled against *him* in the desert.

At that time, God said to them, "They tried to determine how many *things that displeased me they could do* in the desert *without me punishing them*."

⁹ Your ancestors repeatedly tested *whether I would be patient with them, even though* for forty years they saw all the amazing things I did.

¹⁰ So, I became disgusted with the people who saw those things, and I said *about them*, "They are constantly disloyal to me, and they do not understand how I *wanted them* to conduct their lives."

¹¹ As a result, because I was angry with them, I solemnly declared, "They will not enter *the land of Canaan* where I would let them rest [MTY]!"

Hebrews 3:12-15

THEME: Beware that you do not stop trusting in Christ.

¹² In accordance with that, my fellow believers, beware that none of you wickedly stops trusting *in Christ*. That would cause you to reject the all-powerful God. ¹³ Instead, each of you must encourage each other every day, while *you still have* the opportunity [IDM], in order that no one of you may stubbornly *reject God* by *letting others* deceive you (OR, as you deceive yourselves), *with the result that you(sg) sin* [PRS]. ¹⁴ *We must do that*, because we(*inc*) benefit in *all Christ has done* only if we firmly keep trusting *in him* from the time when we first confidently *trusted in him* until *the time when we die* [EUP]. ¹⁵ *We can do this* by paying attention to *what the Psalmist wrote in that Scripture passage in which God said*,

Now, when you hear me speaking to you(*pl*) [MTY], do not stubbornly disobey me as *the Israelites stubbornly disobeyed me* when they rebelled *against me*.

Hebrews 3:16-19

THEME: It was their ancestors for whom God did great things who rebelled against God.

¹⁶ <*You must keep trusting in God* because you must remember who it was who rebelled against God although they heard him speaking to them./Do you remember who it was who rebelled against God although they heard *him speaking to them?*> [RHQ] It was not people who had not experienced God's power. Instead, <it was all those people whom Moses led miraculously out of Egypt./was it not all those people whom Moses led *miraculously* out of Egypt?> [RHQ] ¹⁷ And <*you must remember* who it was that God was disgusted with for forty years./do you *remember* who it was that God was disgusted with for forty years?> [RHQ] <It was those same people who had sinned like that, and whose bodies as a result lay where they died in the desert!/Was it not those *same* people who had sinned *like that*, and whose bodies as a result lay *where they died* in the desert area?> [RHQ] ¹⁸ And <*you must remember* about whom God solemnly declared, "They will not enter the land where I would let them rest."/do you *remember* about whom *God* solemnly declared, "They will not enter the land where I *would let them rest*"?> [RHQ] It was those Israelites who disobeyed God. ¹⁹ So, from that example we(*inc*) perceive that it was because they did not trust *in God* that they were unable to enter *the land where they would rest*.

Hebrews 4:1-5

THEME: The Israelites failed to enter the place where they would rest; we must beware of acting like them.

4 ¹ *The Israelites did not enter the place where they would rest*. But God has still promised us that we can enter the place of resting *in heaven eternally*. So we must beware of *the possibility* that God may consider that some of you have failed to

enter the *place of resting eternally as the Israelites did not enter the place where they would rest.* ²We have heard the message *about Christ*, just like *the Israelites heard what God promised*. But *just like* the message did not benefit most of those who heard it because they did not believe it as *Joshua and Caleb did*, *it will not benefit us eternally if we do not keep believing it.* ³We who have believed *in Christ* are able to enter the place of resting *eternally*. *We know there is a place where we will rest eternally* because God said,

Because I was angry with them, I solemnly declared, “They will not enter *the land where* I would let them rest.”

God said that even though he ceased his work of *creating things* after he created the world. ⁴What someone wrote somewhere *in the Scriptures* about the seventh day *after he had spent six days creating the world*, supports that,

Then, on the seventh day, God rested from his work of *creating everything*.

⁵But note again what God said about the Israelites *in the passage that I quoted previously*,
They will not enter *the land where* I would let them rest.

Hebrews 4:6-10

THEME: *The Scriptures support the claim that there is a time when God’s people will rest eternally.*

⁶Some people experience entering that *place of resting eternally*. But those *Israelites* who first had the good message preached to them {first heard the good message} *about what God promised them* did not enter *that place of resting*, because they refused to believe *God*. ⁷But *God* appointed another time *that we may enter that place of resting*. That time is now! *We know that is true* because much later than when *the Israelites rebelled against God in the desert*, he caused *King David* to write what I have already quoted,

Now, when you understand what God is saying *to you*, do not stubbornly disobey him.

⁸If *Joshua* had led the *Israelites* to enter the place of resting, God would not have spoken later about another *time when we could rest* [MET]. So *we know God was speaking about another time when some people would enter that place of resting eternally*. ⁹So, just like *God rested on the seventh day after he finished making everything*, there remains a time when God’s people will rest eternally. ¹⁰Specifically, whoever enters God’s place of resting has ceased doing things *to gain God’s favor*, just like God ceased doing his work of *creating everything*.

Hebrews 4:11-13

THEME: *We must beware of being insincere about trying to enter the place of eternal rest.*

¹¹God severely punished the *Israelites* because *they disbelieved his message*. So we must strive to experience entering that *place of resting eternally*, in order that he will not severely punish any of us for not believing *his message*. ¹²*Beware of being insincere about doing this*, because the message God *has given us* very powerfully penetrates our thinking more than a two-edged sword *penetrates flesh* [MET]. It penetrates *deeply* into our souls and spirits, as a *sharp sword can penetrate* into our joints and marrow. That *is, by it God* [PRS] discerns all that we think about, and he discerns all that we desire *to do* [MTY] (OR, *His message* exposes *to us* all our thoughts and all our desires). ¹³God knows everything about everyone. Everything is completely exposed [DOU] to him, *and he is* the one [SYN] who will say whether he approves of what we have done.

Hebrews 4:14-16

THEME: *Let us come boldly to Christ, our high priest, to receive his gracious help.*

¹⁴We have a great high priest who ascended through the heavens *when he returned to God’s presence*. He is Jesus, <God’s Son/the man who is also God>. So let us firmly profess *what we believe about him*. ¹⁵Our high priest can indeed [LIT] compassionately deal with us who tend to sin easily, because he also was tempted *to sin* in every way that we are *tempted to sin*, and yet he did not sin. ¹⁶So, let us come boldly to *Christ* [MTY], who rules [MET] *from heaven* and does for us what we do not deserve, in order that we might experience *his acting mercifully toward us*, and in order that we might experience his kindly helping us whenever we need *it*.

Hebrews 5:1-10

THEME: As Christ suffered, he learned to be a compassionate high priest by obeying God.

5 ¹Every Jewish high priest was chosen by God {God chose every Jewish high priest} from among ordinary men. They were appointed {He appointed them} in order that they would come before him on behalf of the people. *Specifically, God appointed them* in order that they would bring gifts to him on behalf of the people, and in order to sacrifice animals to him for people who sinned. ²The high priests could deal gently with those who ignorantly sinned, since they themselves tended to sin easily. ³As a result, they had to offer something to God for themselves for their own sins, just like *they had to offer something to God* for God's people who sinned. ⁴Furthermore, no one honors himself by appointing himself to become a high priest. Instead, God chose each man to become a high priest, as he chose Aaron to be the first high priest. ⁵Similarly, Christ also did not honor himself by appointing himself to become a high priest. Instead, God appointed him by saying to him what he never said to any other priest, what the Psalmist wrote in the Scriptures,

You(sg) are my Son!

Today I have declared that I am your Father!

⁶And he also said to Christ what the Psalmist wrote in another Scripture passage,

You are a priest eternally just like Melchizedek was a priest.

⁷When Christ lived on the earth [MTY], he prayed [DOU] to God and tearfully cried out loudly to him. *Specifically, he asked God, who was able to help him, that he would not fear the sufferings just before he died.* As a result, God listened to him, because Christ reverently submitted to what God wanted him to do. ⁸Although Christ is God's own Son, he learned to obey God by suffering before he died. ⁹By becoming <all that God intended him to be/perfect>, he has now become fully qualified to be our high priest. As a result, he is the one who saves eternally all who obey him. ¹⁰Furthermore, God has designated him to be our high priest in the way that Melchizedek was a high priest.

Hebrews 5:11-14

THEME: You are not ready for more advanced spiritual truth.

¹¹Although there is much to say to you(pl) about how Christ resembles Melchizedek, this is hard for me to explain to you because you now understand things so slowly. ¹²You became Christians long ago. So by now you should be teaching spiritual truths to others. But you still need someone to teach you again the truths that God has revealed. *I am talking about the truths that we teach people when they first believe in Christ.* You need those elementary truths like babies need milk [MET]. You are not ready for advanced teaching, which is like the solid food which mature people need [MET].

¹³Remember that those who are still learning these elementary truths [MET] have not become familiar with what God says concerning becoming/being righteous. They are just like [MET] babies who need milk! ¹⁴But the more advanced spiritual truth is for people who are spiritually mature, just like [MET] solid food is for people who are physically mature. They can tell the difference between what is good and what is evil, because they have trained themselves to keep doing that.

Hebrews 6:1-8

THEME: If you believers later reject the message about Christ, God will reject you.

6 ¹So, we(inc) must not keep discussing the elementary principles about Christ. Instead, we must proceed to the teaching that will make us spiritually mature [MTY]. We must not be people who always need someone to teach them the elementary truths about Christ that are like [MET] a foundation. *I am referring to the teaching that people who do sinful things, things that those who are spiritually [MET] dead do, must turn away from their sinful behavior. I am referring to the teaching that people must believe in God.* ²*I am referring to the teaching about what various Jewish and Christian rituals for purifying people signify. I am referring to the teaching about how elders enable people to receive spiritual gifts by laying hands on them [MTY]. I am referring to the teaching that God will <cause those who have died to live again/raise people from the dead>.* And *I am referring to the teaching that God will judge some people and punish them eternally.* ³*Instead of continuing to discuss these elementary truths, we(inc) (OR, I) will go on to give people mature teaching, if God allows it.* ⁴*I will explain why it is important to do that. Some people have at one time fully understood the message about Christ [MET]. They have experienced a relationship with Jesus Christ that God [EUP/MTY] gave to them. They have received the Holy Spirit the same as others have.* ⁵They have experienced that God's message is good. And by what they have experienced now, they know how God will work powerfully in the future. If those people reject the message about Christ, it will not be possible for anyone to persuade them to turn away from their sinful behavior again! ⁶What those believers who later renounce the message about Christ do is as though [MET] they themselves are nailing the Son of God to a cross again! They are causing others to publicly despise Christ. ⁷Think about this: It is land on which rain has frequently fallen [PRS] and on which plants grow [PRS] that is useful for the people who prepare the land that God has blessed. *Similarly, it is those believers who have received many good things from God and who do good deeds/things that please God, whom God will bless [MET].* ⁸But what will happen to believers who do deeds/things that do not please God will be like what happens to land on which only thorns and thistles grow [MET]. *Such land is worthless. It has almost become land that God will curse, and eventually he will burn its vegetation [MTY].*

Hebrews 6:9-12

THEME: *But God will not overlook all you have done for him.*

⁹Although I am writing *to you* like this as a *warning*, I am certain concerning you whom I love that *you are doing* better than that. Specifically, I am certain that *you are doing* the things that are appropriate *for those whom God* has saved. ¹⁰Since God always acts justly [LIT], he will not overlook all you have done *for him*. *He will also not overlook* [MTY] *your showing that you love him* by the way you helped your fellow believers and *by the way you still help* them. *Instead, God will reward you for doing good deeds*. ¹¹I strongly want each of you to diligently continue to fully expect to receive *what God has provided for you*, until you finally *receive all that you have confidently expected to receive*. ¹²I do not want you to be lazy. *Instead, I want you to imitate those who by their patience and continuing to trust in God are receiving what he promised them*.

Hebrews 6:13-20

THEME: *Our confidence is in God because he promised to bless us, and he made an oath to confirm that he would do that.*

¹³When God promised to *do things for Abraham*, he said that he would punish himself *if he did not do that*, because there was no one of greater importance to ask to punish him *if he did not do it*. ¹⁴He said *to Abraham*, “I will certainly bless you(sg), and I will certainly increase *the number of your descendants* [SYN].” ¹⁵As a result, after Abraham patiently waited *for God to do what he promised*, he obtained what God promised him. ¹⁶*Keep in mind that when people promise something*, they ask a more important person to punish them if they do not do what they promise. Furthermore, when people ask God to punish them *if they do not tell the truth*, that causes the people who are disputing to stop disputing. ¹⁷So, when God wanted to demonstrate very clearly *◀to us/to those people▶* who would receive what he had promised that he would not change what he had purposed *to do*, he solemnly guaranteed that he would declare himself guilty if he did not do what he promised. ¹⁸He did that to strongly encourage us as a result of our *knowing that God has done* two things that cannot change. *Namely, he promised to bless us, and he solemnly declared that he would declare himself guilty if he did not bless us*. We know that God, who did those things, cannot lie. We have fled *to him* in order that we might continue confidently to expect to receive what he promised us. ¹⁹*Our confidently expecting* [SYN] *to receive what he has promised is like an anchor* [MET] that very firmly [DOU] *holds us fast*. *The one we confidently expect to help us* [SYN] *is Jesus, who goes into God’s very presence, just like the high priests went behind the curtain into the innermost part of the tent in the barren area* [MET]. ²⁰Jesus went *into God’s presence* ahead of us(*inc*) to *help us* when he became a high priest eternally in the way that Melchizedek was a high priest.

Hebrews 7:1-3

THEME: *There are ways in which Melchizedek was like God’s Son.*

7 ¹Now I will say more about this man Melchizedek. He was the king of Salem city and was a priest of God, the one who is greater *than anyone else*. He met Abraham who was returning *home* after *he and his men* had defeated the *armies of four kings* [SYN]. Melchizedek *asked God to bless Abraham*. ²Then Abraham gave to him one tenth of all *the spoils he took after winning the battle*. *Melchizedek’s name* means firstly ‘king who rules righteously,’ and since Salem means ‘peace’, he was the ‘king who rules peacefully.’ ³*In the Scriptures there is no record of who his father was, nor is there any record of who his mother was, nor is there any record of when he was born, nor is there any record of when he died. For these reasons, it is as though he continues to be a priest forever, and for this reason he is like God’s Son*.

Hebrews 7:4-10

THEME: *Melchizedek was greater than Abraham.*

⁴You can realize how great this man *Melchizedek* was from the fact that Abraham, *our famous ancestor*, gave him *◀a tithe/one tenth▶* of the spoils *from the battle*. ⁵According to the laws *God gave Moses*, the descendants of *Abraham’s great grandson Levi*, who were priests, should take tithes from *God’s people* who were their relatives, even though those people also were Abraham’s descendants. ⁶But this man *Melchizedek*, who was not among the descendants of *Levi*, took tithes from Abraham. He also *asked God to bless Abraham*, the man to whom *God* promised *many descendants*. ⁷We know for certain that it is the more *important people* who *ask God to bless* the less important people. *And Melchizedek blessed Abraham. So we conclude that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham*. ⁸In the case of *the priests who are descendants of Levi*, men who some day will die receive tithes. But in the case of *Melchizedek it is as if God* testifies that he was still living, *since there is no record in Scriptures about his death*. ⁹And it was as though Levi himself, and *all the priests descended from him—who received tithes from the people—paid tithes to Melchizedek*. And when Abraham paid tithes, it was as though *Levi and all the priests descended from him acknowledged that the work Melchizedek did as a priest was greater than the work Levi did*, ¹⁰since the *sperm from which all those priests were eventually born* was still in Abraham’s body [EUP] when Melchizedek met Abraham.

Hebrews 7:11-19

THEME: *The former Jewish priests were not adequate, so a new one like Melchizedek had to come.*

¹¹ God gave his laws to his people at the same time he gave regulations about the priests. So, if what the priests who were descended from Levi did could have provided a way for God to completely *forgive* people for *disobeying those laws*, <certainly no other priest like Melchizedek would have been necessary./why would another priest like Melchizedek have been necessary?> [RHQ] Instead, priests who were descended from Aaron, *Levi's descendant, would have been adequate.* ¹² *But we know they were not adequate, because a new type of priest like Melchizedek has come.* And since God has appointed a new type of priest, he also had to change the regulations *concerning how priests were appointed* {*he appointed priests*}. ¹³ Jesus, the one about whom *I am saying these things*, is a descendant of someone else, *not a descendant of Levi.* None of the men *from whom Jesus descended* ever served as priests [MTY]. ¹⁴ *We know that* since it is obvious that it is from *the tribe of Judah* that our Lord was descended. Moses never said that any of Judah's descendants would *become* priests. ¹⁵ Furthermore, *we know that the priests who were descended from Levi were inadequate*, since it is even more obvious that another priest has appeared who is like Melchizedek. ¹⁶ Jesus became a priest, but not because *he fulfilled* what God's law required *about being a descendant of Levi.* Instead, he has the kind of power that *came from a life* that nothing can destroy (OR, *enabled him to live again after he was killed*). ¹⁷ *We know this* since God confirmed it in *the Scripture passage in which he said to his Son*,

You(sg) are a priest eternally just like Melchizedek was a priest.

¹⁸ On the one hand, God canceled what he commanded previously *concerning the priests* because it failed in every way to enable anyone to *become all that God intended.* ¹⁹ Remember that no one was able to become all that God intended by *obeying the laws that God gave Moses.* On the other hand, *God caused that we could* confidently expect better things *than we could expect by obeying God's laws.* *He did that by his establishing Christ as priest.* Now by means of *Christ sacrificing himself for us* we can come near to God.

Hebrews 7:20-25

THEME: *Jesus lives eternally as a high priest to plead with God for us.*

²⁰ Furthermore, *when God appointed Christ, it was when God solemnly declared that Christ would be a priest* [LIT]. When God appointed former priests, it was not by his solemnly declaring *that they would be priests.* ²¹ However, when he appointed Christ to be a priest, it was by these words that *the Psalmist wrote in Scripture:*

The Lord has solemnly declared *to the Messiah*,
—and he will not change his mind—
“You will be a priest forever!”

²² Because of that, Jesus guarantees that *the new covenant* will be better *than the old one.*

²³ And formerly, the priests could not keep serving *as priests*, because they all died [PRS]. So there were many priests to *take the place of the ones who died.* ²⁴ But because *Jesus lives eternally*, he will continue to be a high priest forever. ²⁵ So, he can completely and eternally save those who come to God by *trusting in what Christ has done for them*, since he lives forever to plead *with God* to help them.

Hebrews 7:26-28

THEME: *Jesus is the kind of high priest we need, because he was sinless.*

²⁶ Jesus is the kind of high priest that we need. He was holy, he did no wrong, and he was innocent. *God has now separated him from living among sinners, and has now taken him up to the highest heaven.* ²⁷ *The Jewish high priests need to sacrifice animals day by day as well as year by year.* They do this, firstly, *to atone* for their own sins, and then *to atone for other people who have sinned.* But because *Jesus never sinned*, he does not need to do that. The only thing *he needed to do to save people* was to sacrifice himself once! ²⁸ *We need a high priest like him*, because *Moses wrote in the laws that God gave him* [PRS] that the ones who would be appointed to be priests would be men who tended *to sin easily.* But *God solemnly declared* [PRS] after *he had given his laws to Moses* that *he would appoint* <his Son/the man who is also God> *to be a high priest.* Now <his Son/the man who is also God> has forever become all that God intends him to be.

Hebrews 8:1-6

THEME: *The rituals that were performed by the Jewish high priests were only a model of what Jesus our high priest does in heaven.*

8 ¹ The main point of *all that I have written* is that we have a high priest like that. He has sat down to rule [MTY] with God [EUP] at the place of greatest honor in heaven. ² He ministers in the Most Holy Place, that is, in the true place of *worship in heaven.* That is a place that *Moses' tent represented.* The Lord set up the true place of worship. No human *set it up.*

³Every high priest was appointed {God appointed every high priest} to offer to God gifts and sacrifices for people who sinned. So, since Christ became a high priest, he also had to offer something. ⁴Since there are already Jewish priests who offer gifts as God's laws require, if Christ were now living on the earth, he would not be a high priest. ⁵The Jewish priests perform rituals which are only a model [DOU] of what Christ would do in heaven [MTY]. What God told Moses when Moses was about to set up the tent for worshipping him supports the idea that those rituals were only a model. God said, "Be sure that you(sg) make everything according to the model that I showed you on Sinai Mountain!" ⁶But now as it is, Christ ministers in a more excellent way than the Jewish priests do. Likewise, the new covenant that he established between God and people is better than the old one. When the new covenant was established {God established the new covenant}, he promised us better things than the laws that God gave Moses did.

Hebrews 8:7-13

THEME: *The first covenant was not adequate, so God needed a new one.*

⁷If that first covenant had been perfectly adequate [LIT], God would not have thought that he needed another covenant to replace it. But it was not adequate, so he needed a new one. ⁸Because God declared that the Israelites were guilty of not obeying the first covenant, he wanted a new covenant. This is what <a prophet/Jeremiah> wrote about that:

The Lord says, "Listen! There will soon be a time when I will make a new covenant with the people [MTY] of Israel and the people [MTY] of Judah.

⁹That covenant will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I led them out of Egypt [MET] like a father leads a child by the hand.

They did not continue to obey my covenant, so I rejected them," says the Lord.

¹⁰"This is the covenant that I will make with the Israelites [MTY], after the first covenant has ended" [MTY]," says the Lord:

"I will enable them to understand my laws [MTY], and I will enable them to obey them (OR, truly know them) [MTY] sincerely.

I will be their God, and they will be my people [DOU].

¹¹As a result, no one will need to teach a fellow citizen or tell his fellow kinsmen, 'You need to know the Lord,'

because all my people will know me:

my people of every status will know me.

¹²I will mercifully forgive them for the wicked things they have done.

I will no longer consider that they are guilty for [DOU] their sins."

¹³Since God spoke about a new covenant, he considered that the first covenant was no longer in use, and that it would soon disappear, just like anything that gets old will disappear [MET, DOU].

Hebrews 9:1-5

THEME: *A description of the man-made sanctuary that accompanied the first covenant.*

9 ¹To continue: In the first covenant God regulated how people should perform rituals, and he instituted a man-made [MTY] sanctuary. ²That sanctuary was a tent that the Israelites set up. In its outer room there was the lampstand and the table on which they put the bread that the priests presented to God. That room was called 'the holy place.' ³Behind the curtain inside the holy place there was another room. That was called 'the very holy place.' ⁴It had an altar, made from gold, for burning incense. It also had the chest which they called the chest of the covenant. All its sides were covered with gold. In it was the golden pot which contained pieces of the food they called manna. That was the food with which God miraculously fed the people before they entered the promised land. In the chest there was also Aaron's walking stick that budded to prove that he was God's true priest. In the chest were also the stone tablets on which God had written the Ten Commandments. ⁵On top of the chest were figures of winged creatures that symbolized God's glory. Their wings overshadowed the chest's lid where the high priest sprinkled the blood <to atone for/to forgive> those who had sinned. I do not need to write about these things in detail now.

Hebrews 9:6-10

THEME: *Offerings that were made under the first covenant were not able to remove a sense of guilt for sin.*

⁶After all those things were prepared {After they had prepared all those things like that} in the two rooms of the tent, the Jewish priests habitually went into the outer room of the tent to perform their rituals. ⁷But into the inner room, only the high priest went, once a year. He always took [LIT] the blood of animals that they had slaughtered. He offered them to God for his own sins and for the sins that other people had committed. They included sins that they did not realize were sinful. ⁸By those things the Holy Spirit indicated that just like God did not reveal the way for ordinary people to enter into the inner room while the outer room still existed [MET], similarly he did not reveal the way for ordinary people to enter the presence of God while the Jewish system of offering sacrifices was in effect. ⁹The things that the priests did inside the outer room [MTY] symbolized what was true during the time when the first covenant was in effect. According to the first covenant (OR, in that outer room), priests offered gifts and other sacrifices to God. But by offering them, the people who brought

them were unable to make themselves feel that they were no longer guilty for having sinned. ¹⁰ *They brought those gifts and made those sacrifices* only according to *regulations concerning* things to eat and drink, and *rules that required people* to wash various things. *God* declared that those regulations about our bodies were to be in effect until *he put into effect the new covenant*; that was a better system.

Hebrews 9:11-14

THEME: *Christ redeemed us by offering his own blood as a sacrifice.*

¹¹ But when Christ came as our high priest, *he brought* the good things that are now available. When he appeared, *he went into God's presence in heaven. That is like a* [MET] very great and perfect tent not made by humans {which no human made} [SYN]; that is, it is not part of the world *God* created. It was better *than the tent Moses set up here on earth.* ¹² *When a high priest goes into the inner room in the tent each year, he takes* goats' blood and calves' blood *to offer as a sacrifice.* But Christ did not *do that. It was as though* he went into that very holy place only once, taking his own blood with him. By doing that, he eternally redeemed us. ¹³ The priests sprinkle on people goats' blood and bulls' blood and *the water that has been filtered through* the ashes of a *red* heifer that has been *completely burned.* *By performing that ritual, they can ritually* cleanse the bodies of those who are *ceremonially* unclean. Furthermore, performing those rituals enabled people to have fellowship with *God* again. ¹⁴ *So, because we know what Christ accomplished when his blood flowed when he died for us* [PRS, MTY], we will be very certain that we are not guilty *for having* done those things *that those who are spiritually* dead do. *As a result,* we can serve the all-powerful *God.* *The priests always offer to God animals* with no defects. Similarly, when Christ offered himself as a *sacrifice* to *God,* he was sinless [MET]. He did that as a result of *God's* eternal Spirit *helping him.*

Hebrews 9:15-22

THEME: *Christ has put the new covenant into effect with his own blood.*

¹⁵ *By dying for us, Christ* <redeemed/set free from the penalty for their sins> even those who disobeyed the *conditions of* (OR: *during the time of*) the first covenant. *So, because no one could be made perfect by obeying the old covenant,* now Christ establishes *between God and people* a new covenant. He does that in order that those whom *God* has chosen may eternally have *the blessings that God* has promised them. ¹⁶ *A covenant is like a will. In the case of a will, in order to put its provisions into effect,* someone must prove that the one who made it has died. ¹⁷ *A will goes into effect only when the one who makes the will* has died. It is not in effect when the one who made it is still alive. ¹⁸ *And so God* put the first covenant into effect only [LIT] by means of *animals'* blood that was shed *when they were slaughtered.* ¹⁹ *After Moses* had declared to all the Israelites everything that *God* commanded in the laws *that God gave him,* he took calves' and goats' blood *mixed* with water. He *dipped into it* scarlet wool *that he tied around* a sprig of hyssop. Then he sprinkled *with some of the blood* the scroll itself containing *God's* laws. Then he sprinkled *more of that blood on all the people,* ²⁰ saying to them, "This is the blood *which brings into effect* the covenant that *God* commanded that you *obey.*" ²¹ Likewise, he sprinkled with that blood the tent and every object that they used in performing rituals. ²² *It was by sprinkling* blood that they *ritually* cleansed almost everything. That was what *was stated in God's* laws. If blood is not shed *when people offer a sacrifice, God* can not forgive *the person who is making the sacrifice.*

Hebrews 9:23-28

THEME: *The Jewish priests kept offering the blood of animal sacrifices every year, but Christ sacrificed himself once to take away our guilt.*

²³ *So, by rituals like that, it was necessary for the priests* to cleanse the things that symbolized what Christ does [MTY] in heaven. But *God* has to *consecrate* the *people who will enter* [MTY] heaven *by means of* better sacrifices than those. ²⁴ Christ did not enter a sanctuary that humans made. That one only represented the true *sanctuary.* Instead, he entered heaven itself, in order to now be in *God's* presence <to plead with *God* for/to represent> us. ²⁵ *The Jewish* high priest enters the very holy place once every year, taking blood that is not his own, *to offer it as a sacrifice.* But when Christ entered heaven, it was not in order to offer himself repeatedly like that. ²⁶ *If that were so,* he would have needed to suffer *and shed his blood* repeatedly since *the time when God* created the world. But instead, in this final age, *Christ* has appeared once in order that by sacrificing himself he could cause *that people* no longer will be *guilty for their sins.* ²⁷ All people must die once, and after that *God* will judge them *for their sins.* ²⁸ Likewise, when Christ *died, God* offered him once to be a sacrifice, to punish him instead of the many *people who had* sinned. He will come *to earth* a second time, not *in order to sacrifice himself again for those who* have sinned, but in order to *complete* his saving those who expectantly wait for him.

Hebrews 10:1-4

THEME: *The blood of animals can never take away the guilt for sins.*

10 ¹ Just like a shadow vaguely represents the thing that it is a shadow of, the laws that *God gave Moses* only poorly represent [MET] the good things that were to come later. Those laws were not all the good things themselves that *God* has promised. *So, by offering the same kinds of sacrifices every year, people* [PRS] who approach *God* can never become

◀perfect/all that God intends them to be>. ² If God had removed the guilt for having sinned of those who brought the sacrifices, they would not feel that they were still guilty. So ▶they would certainly have stopped offering those sacrifices!> [RHQ] ³ But rather, the fact that they offer those sacrifices each year reminds them that they are still guilty for their sins, ⁴ because no blood of animals such as bulls or goats can remove the guilt of those who have sinned.

Hebrews 10:5-10

THEME: *Christ set us apart for God by offering his own body once as a sacrifice.*

⁵ So, as *Christ* was coming into the world, he said to his *Father* about offering himself as a sacrifice for people's sin, in words that the *Psalmist* wrote,

It is not sacrifices and offerings that you (sg) have wanted,
but you have prepared for me a body to serve you.

⁶ Animals that are completely burned up as sacrifices have not pleased you,
and other sacrifices that atone for those who have sinned have not pleased you.

⁷ Then because of this, I said, "My God, ▶listen! here I am!>

I have come here in order to do what you want me to do,
just like has been written {as they have written} about me in the Scriptures."

⁸ First he said, "It is not sacrifices and offerings and animals that the *priests* have completely burned up and other offerings to atone for those who have sinned that you have really wanted. They have not pleased you." He said that even though those things were offered {they offered all those things} according to the laws God gave Moses! ⁹ Then, concerning his offering himself as a sacrifice to atone for people's sin, he said, "Listen! I have come here to do what you want me to do!" Thus Christ got rid of the first way of atoning for sin, in order to establish the second way of atoning for sin. ¹⁰ Because of Jesus Christ doing what God wanted him to do, we have been set apart {he has set us apart} for God by his offering his own body only once as a sacrifice, a sacrifice that will not need to be repeated.

Hebrews 10:11-18

THEME: *Scripture supports the claim that Christ made one sacrifice that will be adequate forever.*

¹¹ As every Jewish priest stands daily in front of the altar, he performs rituals and offers the same kind of sacrifices that could never remove the guilt from anyone who sinned [MTY]. ¹² But *Christ* one time offered a sacrifice that will be adequate forever! Then he sat down to rule with God at the place of highest honor [MTY]. ¹³ From now on, he is waiting for God to completely subdue all his enemies [MTY]. ¹⁴ By offering himself once, he has provided that those whom God has set apart will be eternally made ▶perfect/all that God intends them to be>. ¹⁵ The Holy Spirit also confirms to us that that is true. First ¹⁶ the Lord says:

¹⁶ When the time [MTY] of the first covenant with my people has finished,

I will make a new covenant with them [MTY].

I will do like this for them:

I will cause them to understand my laws

and I will cause them to obey them (OR, enable them to know them sincerely).

¹⁷ Then he said:

I will forgive them for their [DOU] sins,

and I will consider that they are no longer guilty for having sinned.

¹⁸ When God has forgiven someone's sins, that person does not need to make any more offerings to atone for his sin!

Hebrews 10:19-25

THEME: *Let us come to God and let him make us pure and help us to hold fast to his truth and do things that please him.*

¹⁹ So, my fellow believers, because we trust in what Jesus accomplished when his own blood flowed for us, we can confidently go into God's very presence that was symbolized by the very holy place in the tent [MTY]. ²⁰ He enabled us to go into God's presence by making a new and effective way. Specifically, he offered his body as a sacrifice for us in order that nothing would stop us from entering God's presence, just like [MET] the curtain of the very holy place prevented people from entering God's presence. ²¹ Christ is a great priest who rules over us, who are God's people [MTY]. ²² Just like the priests were sprinkled {as Moses sprinkled the priests} with blood [MET] to symbolize that they were no longer guilty for having sinned, we also no longer are guilty for having done evil. Just like the priests ceremonially washed their bodies with pure water to prepare themselves to serve God, we are allowing God to continually make us pure. So, we (inc) must approach God sincerely by confidently trusting in him. ²³ We must unwaveringly keep professing what we believe. Since God faithfully does all he promised to do, we must confidently expect him to keep doing that. ²⁴ Since God faithfully does all that he promised to do, let us consider how each of us can stimulate the others, in order that each one will love the others, and in order that each one will do good deeds. ²⁵ We must not cease assembling ourselves to worship the Lord, as some people have done. Instead, each one of us must encourage/exhort the others. Let us do that all the more since we know that the day that the Lord will return [MTY] is near.

Hebrews 10:26-31

THEME: *If we have known and then rejected the message about Christ, God will surely punish us.*

²⁶ *We (inc) must do those things*, because if we deliberately and habitually sin after we have known the true *message about Christ*, no other sacrifice will remove our guilt for having sinned in this way. ²⁷ Instead, we must fearfully expect that *God will judge us*, and then he will angrily *punish* his enemies in a furious fire [MET]. ²⁸ They mercilessly killed everyone who rejected the laws *that God gave Moses* when *at least two or three people testified* that they had done that. ²⁹ *That was severe punishment*. But *Christ* is <God's Son/the man who is also God>. His blood, by means of which *he put into effect* the new covenant, is sacred. Because of *Christ's* [MTY] *blood flowing for us when he died*, *God freed us from our guilt*. So, you can be sure [RHQ] that anyone who shows contempt for *those truths* and who insults the Spirit of God, who acts with kindness toward us in a way we do not deserve, deserves to be punished even worse than that [MET]! ³⁰ *We can be sure of that* (OR, *need to think about that carefully*) since we know that God said, "I myself will get revenge on those who sinned, and I will give them the punishment that they deserve [DOU]." And *Moses wrote*, "The Lord will judge his people." ³¹ It will be a terrible thing if the all-powerful God [MTY] seizes and punishes you [IDM]!

Hebrews 10:32-39

THEME: *Remember how you accepted persecution because of your faith in Christ, and do not be discouraged if you are persecuted now.*

³² Recall the former times when you *first understood* [MET] *the message about Christ*. You endured a hard struggle, and you *continued to trust him* when you suffered *because you believed in Christ*. ³³ At times you were publicly insulted {people publicly insulted you} and you were caused to suffer {people persecuted you}. At other times you showed great concern for those who were treated like that. ³⁴ You not only were kind to those who were in prison *because they believed in Christ*, but you also accepted it joyfully when *unbelievers* took away your possessions. You accepted it because you yourselves knew very well that you have eternal possessions *in heaven* that are much better *than those that they took from you!* ³⁵ So, do not become discouraged *when they cause you to suffer* {you are persecuted}, because *if you continue to trust in God*, he will greatly reward you. ³⁶ You must patiently continue *to trust in him* in order that, because of your doing what God wants you to do, he will give you what he has promised. ³⁷ *You must do that since a prophet wrote* in the Scriptures *that God said about the Messiah*,

In just a short time the one *I promised* would come will surely come;
he will not delay coming.

³⁸ But those whom I have summoned, who *act righteously*, must continually live trusting in me,
because if they, in a cowardly manner, cease *to trust in me*,
I <will not be pleased/will be angry> with them.

³⁹ But we are not ones who in a cowardly manner cease *to trust in God*, with the result that God will severely punish us. Instead, we are ones who trust in him, with the result that *God will save us* [SYN] eternally.

Hebrews 11:1-3

THEME: *Because of our faith, we confidently expect to receive God's promises.*

11 ¹ It is because people trust *God* that they are sure that they will receive the things that they confidently expect *God to give them*. They are also certain *that they will see those things happen*, though no one sees them yet. ² It was because our ancestors trusted in God that *he commended them*. ³ It is because we trust in God that we understand that God formed the universe by commanding *that it exist*. The result is that the *things that we see were not made from things that already existed*.

Hebrews 11:4

THEME: *Because of his faith, Abel made a better sacrifice than his brother Cain did.*

⁴ It was because *Adam's son Abel* trusted God that he sacrificed something better to God than what *his older brother Cain* offered to God. Because Abel did that, when God spoke well about what Abel sacrificed, God declared that Abel was righteous. And although Abel is dead, we still learn from him *about trusting God*.

Hebrews 11:5-12

THEME: *Because of their faith, God blessed Enoch, Noah, and Abraham.*

⁵ It was because Enoch believed *God that God took him up to heaven*. The result was that he did not die. No one found him, because he was taken up {*God had removed him*} from the earth *to heaven*. Before *God took him away*, *he testified* that Enoch pleased him well. ⁶ It is possible for people to please God only if they trust God, because anyone who wants to come to God must first believe that God exists and that he rewards those who seek *to know him*.

⁷ It was because Noah trusted God that after he was warned by God {after God warned him} about a *flood that had not yet happened*, Noah *showed that he revered God* by building a huge ship to save his family. By doing that, he *showed all the people who did not believe him* [MTY] *that they deserved to be condemned* {that God would condemn them}. He became one whom God declared to be righteous because of his trusting in God.

⁸ It was because Abraham trusted God that when he was called {when God called to him}, he obeyed God, he left *his own country*, and went to a place that God would give him. Abraham left his own country, even though he did not know where he would be going. ⁹ It was because Abraham trusted God that he lived as though he was a foreigner in a land that God had promised to him. Abraham lived in tents, and his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob did also. God promised to give them the same things that he promised to give Abraham. ¹⁰ Abraham was waiting to live in a city *in heaven* that would remain forever [MET]. It was a city that God is building [DOU]. ¹¹ It was because Abraham trusted God that God gave Abraham strength so that he *was able to produce a son*. Even though his wife Sarah was beyond the time *when women bear children*, God promised *that he would give her a son*, and Abraham considered that God would do what he promised to do. ¹² So, although Abraham was too old to have children, from that one man people descended who are as many in number as the stars in the sky and are as countless as the grains of sand along the shore, *just like God promised him*.

Hebrews 11:13-16

THEME: *All those people who had faith in God died without receiving what God promised.*

¹³ It was while they still trusted in God that all those people died. Even though they had not yet received the things that God had promised to give them, *it was as though* they saw those things in a distance. They were glad *to know* about what he promised. It was as though they admitted that they were not from this earth, but that they were only here temporarily. ¹⁴ As for those people who say/believe such things, they clearly show that they long for *a place that will become* their true native land. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking about *that place being* the place from which they had come, they would have taken the opportunity to return there. ¹⁶ But, instead, they desired *a better place in which to live*; that is, they desired *a home* in heaven. So God has prepared a city for them to live *with him*, and he is pleased [LIT] for them to say that he is their God.

Hebrews 11:17-31

THEME: *It was because they trusted God that he blessed Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, the Israelite people, and Rahab.*

¹⁷ It was because Abraham trusted God that he *was ready to kill* his son Isaac as a sacrifice when God tested him. This same man to whom God promised *to give him* <a son/many descendants> was going to sacrifice *that same son*, the only son *whom his own wife had borne!* ¹⁸ It was to him that God said, "It is *only* from Isaac that I will consider your family to descend." ¹⁹ Abraham considered that *to fulfill that promise*, God could make Isaac live again *even if* he had died *after Abraham sacrificed him!* The result was that when Abraham did receive Isaac back *after God told him not to harm Isaac*, it was as though he received him back even after he died.

²⁰ It was because Isaac trusted God that he *prayed that God would bless his sons* Jacob and Esau <after Isaac died/late>.

²¹ It was because Jacob trusted God that, as he was dying, he *prayed that God would bless each of the sons of his own son Joseph*. He worshipped God as he leaned upon his walking-stick *before he died*. ²² It was because Joseph trusted God that, when he was about to die *in Egypt*, he anticipated the time when the Israelites would leave Egypt; and he instructed *that his people should carry his bones with them when they* <left Egypt/returned to Canaan>.

²³ It was because Moses' father and mother trusted God that they hid *their son Moses* for three months shortly after he was born, because they saw that the child was beautiful. They were not afraid of *disobeying* what the king of Egypt had commanded, *namely, that all the Jewish male babies must be killed*. ²⁴ The daughter of the king, *whom they called Pharaoh, raised Moses*, but when he had grown up it was because he trusted God that he refused to *accept the privileges that would have been his if people considered that he was* <the son of the king's daughter/the king's own grandson>. ²⁵ He decided that it was better for others to mistreat him for a time along with the Israelite people, than to temporarily enjoy living *sinfully in the King's palace*. ²⁶ This is because he decided that if he suffered for the Messiah, it would be worth far more *in God's sight* than his owning all the treasures of Egypt *that he would receive as Pharaoh's heir*. He decided that because he looked forward to the time when *God would give him an eternal reward*. ²⁷ It was because he trusted God that he left Egypt. He was not afraid that the king would be angry *because of his doing that*. He <kept going/did not turn back> because *it was as though* he kept seeing God, whom no one can see. ²⁸ It was because Moses believed *that God would save his own people* that he instituted the *festival called Passover*. He did that *by commanding that the people should kill lambs and sprinkle their blood on their doorposts*. They did that in order that *the angel who causes people to die would not kill* [EUP] the oldest male Israelites *when he killed the oldest sons in each Egyptian family*.

²⁹ It was because they trusted God that when the *Israelite* people walked through where the Red Sea *had been*, it was as though they walked on dry land! But, when the *army of Egypt* also attempted to *cross that same water*, they drowned, because *the sea came back and flooded them!*

³⁰ It was because the *Israelite* people trusted God that the walls around Jericho *city* collapsed, after the Israelites marched around the walls for seven days.

³¹ Rahab *had been* a prostitute, but because she trusted God, she did not perish with those *inside Jericho* who disobeyed God. *Joshua sent some spies* into the city *in order* to find ways to destroy it, but God saved her because she welcomed those spies *peaceably*.

Hebrews 11:32-38

THEME: *Some who trusted God gained great victories and others were tortured and killed.*

³² I do not know what more I should say [RHQ] *about others who trusted in God*. It would take too much time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the *other* prophets. ³³ It was because they trusted God that some of them *did great deeds for him*. Some conquered lands ruled by powerful men. Some ruled *Israel* and justly *punished those men and nations who rebelled against God*. Some obtained *from God* the things that he promised to give them [MTY]. ³⁴ Some forced lions to keep their mouths shut. ³⁴ Some escaped from being destroyed by fire. Some of those people escaped from *being killed with a sword* [MTY]. Some of those *people who trusted God* were made strong {became mighty} again after they had once been weak. Some became powerful when they fought wars. Some caused armies *that came from foreign lands* to run away from them. ³⁵ Some women *who trusted God* received *their relatives* back again when God *made them live again after they had died/raised them from the dead*. But *others who trusted God* were tortured until they died. They were tortured because they refused to agree when *their captors said*, 'We will release you *if you deny that you believe in God*.' *They refused to do that*, because they wanted to live with God forever, which is better than *continuing to live on earth* after having almost died. ³⁶ Other *people who trusted God* were mocked; *some had their backs cut open by being struck* with whips. Some were chained and put in prison. ³⁷ Some of those believers were stoned to death {People *killed some of those believers* by throwing stones at them}. Others were cut completely in two. Others were killed with swords. Others of these people who trusted God wandered around the land *wearing garments made only of skins* from sheep and goats. They did not have any money. They were continually oppressed and tormented {People continuously oppressed them and tormented them}. ³⁸ *The people on earth who caused those who trusted in God to suffer were so bad that* they did not deserve *to live with people* like those *who trusted God*. *Some who trusted God* wandered in deserts and mountains. Some lived in caves and in other *large holes* in the ground.

Hebrews 11:39-40

THEME: *Only when we are together with all these people who trusted God will we receive all God has promised.*

³⁹ Although all these people were commended *by God* {God commended all these people} because they all trusted him, God did not give them all that he promised them *while they were alive*. ⁴⁰ God knew ahead of time that what he would give us and them *later* would be better than giving *them immediately what he promised*. What God intends is that only when they and we are together will we have all that God intends us to have.

Hebrews 12:1-2

THEME: *Since we know so many people with faith like that, we must put aside anything, especially sin, which hinders us, and we must strive to achieve God's will and concentrate on Jesus.*

12 ¹ We know about many people like that *who showed they trusted in God*. They are like a crowd of spectators *who are cheering for us inside a stadium* [MET]. Knowing that, we must put away all the things that hinder us, *as a runner puts aside everything that would hinder him because they are heavy* [MET]. Especially we must put away sinful actions that *hinder us, as a runner sets aside clothes he does not need, clothes that would entangle him* [MET]. Let us *wholeheartedly strive to achieve what God has planned for us, as someone in a race wholeheartedly runs the course that is before him* [MET]. ² And let us *keep our minds on Jesus, as a runner keeps his eyes on the goal* [MET]. He is the one we should imitate concerning how he perfectly trusted *God*. *When he died on the cross* he endured it when he suffered greatly [MTY], instead of *thinking about the things he would rejoice about later*. He disregarded being disgraced by *dying that way*. He is now sitting at the place of highest honor [MTY] at the throne *where God rules*.

Hebrews 12:3-6

THEME: *Do not become discouraged when you are suffering as you struggle against evil.*

³ Jesus patiently endured it when sinful people acted so hostilely against him. Compare yourselves with him so that you do not give up *trusting God* or become discouraged. ⁴ While you have struggled against *being tempted to sin*, you have not yet *bled and died because of resisting evil, as Jesus did*. ⁵ Do not forget [RHQ] these words *that Solomon spoke to his son, that are the same as God* would exhort you as his children:

My child, pay attention [LIT] when the Lord is disciplining you,
and do not be discouraged when the Lord punishes you [DOU],

⁶ because it is everyone whom he loves whom the Lord disciplines,
and he punishes everyone whom he accepts as his child.

Hebrews 12:7-11

THEME: *Since our sufferings are to discipline us, if we have not experienced God's discipline we are not his true children. We should accept God's discipline, because it is always to help us.*

⁷ It is in order that God may discipline you that he requires you to endure the disagreeable things *that happen to you*. When God disciplines you, he is treating you as a father treats his children. All fathers [RHQ] discipline their children [LIT]. ⁸ So, if you have not experienced God disciplining you just like he disciplines all his other children, you are *not true children of God* [MET]. *You are like illegitimate children; no father disciplines them.* ⁹ Furthermore, our natural fathers disciplined us when we were young, and we respected them for doing that. So *we should certainly more readily accept God our spiritual Father disciplining us, with the result that we live eternally! shouldn't we more readily accept God, our spiritual Father, disciplining us, with the result that we live eternally?>* [RHQ] ¹⁰ Our natural fathers disciplined us for a short time just like they considered right, but God always disciplines us to help us. He does it so that we may be holy as he is. ¹¹ During the time that God is disciplining us, that does not seem to be something about which we should rejoice. Instead, it is something that pains us. But later it causes those who have learned from it to be peaceful and to *live* righteously.

Hebrews 12:12-17

THEME: *Renew yourselves spiritually; go forward in your Christian life; try to live peacefully with everyone; seek to be holy; guard against bitterness; do not be immoral; and do not refuse to listen to God.*

¹² So, *instead of acting as though you were spiritually exhausted*, renew yourselves [MET] spiritually. ¹³ Go straight forward in your Christian life [MET], in order that believers who are uncertain about their faith *will imitate you* and not *leave God's way/become useless to God>* [MET]. Instead, they will be spiritually restored [MET] as an injured and useless limb is restored. ¹⁴ Try to live peacefully with all people. Seek to be holy, since no one will see the Lord if he is not holy. ¹⁵ Beware that none of you stops *trusting in God, who has done kind things for us that we did not deserve* (OR, Beware that you have never experienced God kindly saving you). Be on guard lest any of you *act evilly towards others*, because that will *grow like* [MET] a root *grows into a big plant*, and the result of your doing that will be that many believers will sin and become unacceptable to God. ¹⁶ Do not let anyone be immoral, or be irreligious as Esau was. He exchanged the rights he had as a firstborn son for only one meal. ¹⁷ You know that after he did that, he wanted to receive *what his father would promise to give him* if he blessed him. But *his father* refused to *do what he requested*. And Esau found no way to change what he had done, even though he sought tearfully to do that.

Hebrews 12:18-24

THEME: *You have not experienced the terrifying things your ancestors did; you have come to Christ and benefited from his blood flowing for you.*

¹⁸ In coming to God you have not *experienced things like what the Israeli people experienced* at Sinai Mountain. They approached a *mountain that God told them they should not touch*. They approached a blazing fire, and it was gloomy and dark [DOU], and there was a hurricane/cyclone. ¹⁹ They heard a trumpet sounding and they heard God speak. The result was that those who heard it pleaded for him not to speak to them like that again. ²⁰ When God commanded them saying, "If a person or even an animal touches this mountain, you must kill him/it by throwing stones at him/it," they were terrified. ²¹ Truly, because Moses was terrified after seeing what happened on the mountain, he said, "I am trembling because I am very afraid!" ²² Instead, *it is as though you have come to the presence of God in heaven* [MET]. *That is like what your ancestors did when they came to worship God on Zion Hill, in Jerusalem, in the city of the all-powerful God.* You have come (OR, you are coming) to where there are countless angels, who are rejoicing as they have gathered together. ²³ You have joined all the believers *who have privileges like first-born sons*, whose names God has written down in heaven. You have come to God, who will judge everyone. You have come to where the spirits of God's people are, people who lived righteously *before they died*, and who now have been made perfect in heaven. ²⁴ You have come to Jesus, who arranged a new covenant between us and God. You have accepted *what he accomplished when his blood flowed when he died on the cross*. *His doing that made it possible for God to forgive us*. That is better than the blood of Abel, who just wanted revenge because his brother Cain murdered him.

Hebrews 12:25-29

THEME: *We should be in awe before God, who will punish us if we reject him.*

²⁵ Beware that you do not refuse to listen to God who is speaking to you. The Israelite people did not escape *God punishing them* when Moses (OR, God) warned them here on earth. So *we shall surely not escape God punishing us if we reject him when he warns us from heaven! how shall we escape God punishing us if we reject him when he warns us from heaven?>* [RHQ] ²⁶ The earth shook [PRS] then when he spoke [MTY] at Sinai Mountain. But now he has promised, "I will shake the earth again, one more time, but I will shake heaven too." ²⁷ The words "again, one more time" indicate that things on earth will be shaken {that he will shake things on earth}, meaning that he will set aside all that he has created, in order that the things in heaven that cannot be shaken {that nothing can shake} may remain forever. ²⁸ So, let us thank God that we are becoming members of a kingdom that nothing can shake. Let us worship/serve God in a way that pleases him by being greatly in awe [DOU] before him. ²⁹ Remember that the God we worship/serve is like a fire that burns up everything that is impure [MET]!

Hebrews 13:1-3

THEME: Love one another, be hospitable, and help imprisoned and other mistreated believers.

13 ¹Continue to love your fellow believers. ²Do not forget to be hospitable to needy travelers [LIT]. You need to know that by being hospitable, some people have entertained angels without knowing it. ³Remember to *help* those who are in prison *because they are Christians*, as though you were in prison with them. Remember those who are being mistreated {whom people are mistreating} *because they are believers*. As you do that, consider that you are also alive [MTY], and you could suffer as they do.

Hebrews 13:4-6

THEME: Respect the marriage relationship, and avoid covetousness.

⁴You must <respect/keep sacred> the marriage relationship in every way, and you must keep sexual relations [EUP] pure, because God will surely condemn those who act immorally and those who act adulterously. ⁵Live without constantly coveting money, and be content with the things you possess, remembering what *Moses* wrote *that God* has said *about supplying what you need*,

I will never leave you,
I will never stop providing for you [DOU].

⁶So we can say confidently *as the Psalmist said*,

Since the Lord is the one who helps me,
I will not be afraid!

<People can do nothing to me *that will deprive me of God's blessings*.
/What can people do to me *that will deprive me of God's blessings?*> [RHQ]

Hebrews 13:7-9

THEME: Remember the manner of life of your former spiritual leaders and imitate their faith; since Christ never changes, do not be diverted to strange teachings.

⁷Your spiritual leaders used to tell you the message of God *before they died*. Remember how they conducted their lives. By considering <how they died/what resulted from how they lived>, imitate how they believed *in Christ/God*. ⁸Jesus Christ *is* the same now as he was previously, and he will be the same forever. ⁹So, do not let yourselves be diverted {let anything divert you} so that you believe various teachings *that are contrary to God's truth*. It is good that we let God act kindly toward us so that we may be strengthened spiritually. *Obeying rules about various foods*, rules that have not benefited those who obeyed them, will not benefit us.

Hebrews 13:10-14

THEME: We must stop practicing Jewish sacrifices and rituals, and go to Jesus to be saved, since we do not have a city like Jerusalem where we must offer sacrifices, but instead we wait for a future everlasting heavenly city.

¹⁰We have *Jesus* [MTY]. All those who continue to observe the Jewish rituals [MTY] of sacrifice have no right to obtain the benefits of his sacrifice [MET]. ¹¹After the high priest brings into the most holy place the blood of animals *that they have sacrificed to atone* for sins, the bodies of those animals are burned {they burn the bodies of those animals} outside the city.

¹²Similarly, Jesus suffered *and died* outside the gate of *Jerusalem* in order that he might make *us*, his people, holy by *offering* his own blood as a *sacrifice to atone for our sins*.

¹³So, we must abandon *performing Jewish sacrifices and rituals* [MET] *in order to be saved*, and let us go to Jesus *to be saved*. As we do that, we must *be willing to* let others reproach us just like people reproached him. ¹⁴Here on earth, we believers do not have a city *such as Jerusalem where we must continually offer sacrifices* [MET]. Instead, we are waiting for a future *heavenly city that will last forever*.

Hebrews 13:15

THEME: Since Christ sacrificed himself for us, let our continual praise of God be our sacrifice.

¹⁵With *the help of Jesus*, we must continually praise God. That will be something we can sacrifice *to him* [MET] *instead of our sacrificing animals only at specific times*. Specifically, we must say openly [MTY] *that we have trusted* in Christ [MTY].

Hebrews 13:16

THEME: Continually do good deeds and share with others, because this too will be a sacrifice pleasing to God.

¹⁶Be continually [LIT] doing good deeds *for others*, and be continually sharing *with others the things you have*, because doing things like that will *also be as though you are offering* sacrifices that will please God.

Hebrews 13:17

THEME: Obey and submit to your spiritual leaders.

¹⁷ Obey your *spiritual* leaders and do what they tell you, since they are the ones who are guarding your spiritual welfare [SYN]. *Some day* they will have to stand before God so that he can say if he approves of what they have done. Obey them in order that they can do the work of guarding you joyfully and not have to do it sadly, because if you cause them to do it sadly, that will certainly not help you at all (OR, they will not be able to help you at all).

Hebrews 13:18-19

THEME: Pray for me that God will quickly remove the things that hinder my coming to you.

¹⁸ Pray for me. I am certain that I have not done anything that displeases God. I have tried to act honorably *toward you* in every way. ¹⁹ I urge you earnestly to pray that *God* will quickly remove the things that hinder my coming to you.

Hebrews 13:20-21

THEME: May God equip you with everything good that you need, and may Christ be praised forever.

²⁰ Jesus *provides for us, protects us, and guides us* as a great shepherd does for his sheep [MET]. And God, who gives us *inner peace*, raised our Lord Jesus from the dead. By doing that, God ratified his eternal covenant with us by the blood *that flowed from Christ when he died on the cross*. ²¹ So I pray that God will equip you with everything good *that you need in order* that you may do the things that he desires. May he accomplish in us the things that he considers pleasing as a result of Jesus Christ *doing this for us*. May Jesus Christ be praised forever. <Amen!/May it be so!>

Hebrews 13:22

THEME: Patiently consider what I have written in this short exhortation.

²² My fellow believers, since this is a short letter that I have written to you, I appeal to you that you patiently consider *what I have just written you* to exhort you.

Hebrews 13:23

THEME: Since Timothy has been released from prison, he will accompany me when I go to see you.

²³ I want you to know that our fellow believer Timothy has been released {*the authorities* have released our fellow believer Timothy} *from prison*. If he comes here soon, he will accompany me when I go to see you.

Hebrews 13:24

THEME: Greet your spiritual leaders and all other believers; the believers who are from Italy send you their greetings.

²⁴ Tell all your *spiritual* leaders and all the *other* fellow believers *in your city* that <I am thinking fondly about them/I am sending them my greetings>. The believers *in this area who have come from Italy want you to know they are* <thinking about you/sending you their greetings>.

Hebrews 13:25

THEME: May God act graciously to you all.

²⁵ *I pray that you will continue to experience God's acting kindly toward you all.*

James, the brother of Jesus, wrote a letter to Jewish believers. We call this letter James

James 1:1

THEME: I, James, am writing this letter to Jewish people who trust in the Lord Jesus who are scattered throughout the world. Greetings!

1 ¹ I, James, am a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. *I am writing this letter to all the Jewish people who trust in Christ* (OR, to all God's people) who are scattered throughout the world. *I send my greetings to you all.*

James 1:2-4

THEME: When you experience difficulties that test whether or not you will continue to trust God, rejoice greatly and keep on bravely enduring them in order that you may become all that God intends you to be.

² My fellow believers, rejoice greatly, even when you experience various kinds of difficulties/troubles. ³ God sometimes allows you to experience difficulties in order to test whether or not you will continue to trust him. *Whenever that happens, you need to realize more and more that if you continue to trust him, you will be able to bravely/patiently endure difficulties.*

⁴ Keep on enduring difficulties *bravely/patiently by trusting God more and more firmly* [PRS], in order that you may become all that he intends you to be [DOU] (OR, *spiritually* mature and complete), not lacking *◀any good quality/anything you need to conduct your lives as God wants you to▶*.

James 1:5-8

THEME: If you want to have wisdom to know what to do when difficulties come, ask God to help you, and firmly trust him.

⁵ If anyone of you does not know how to act wisely *in order to endure difficulties/trials well*, he should ask God *to show him what he should do, because* God wholeheartedly/gladly helps all people *who ask* and does not scold *anyone for asking*. *Those who ask*, God will give them wisdom to know *what they should do*. ⁶ But *when you ask God*, you should firmly trust him. You should not doubt *that he wants to help you always*, because people who keep doubting God are *unstable/changeable* [SIM] like a wave of the sea that is blown back and forth by the wind {that goes back and forth when the wind blows} [DOU, SIM]. ⁷ Indeed, people *who doubt* should not think that the Lord God will do anything *that they request him to do*, ⁸ *because they are* people who cannot decide *whether they will commit themselves to God, and they are* unstable/undecided in all that they do.

James 1:9-11

THEME: Believers who are poor and those who are rich should both value highly what God has done for them, rather than focusing on their material resources that will disappear.

⁹ Believers who are poor should be happy *that God* considers them very valuable (OR, has exalted them *spiritually*) [MTY].

¹⁰ And *believers* who are rich should be happy *that they have humbled themselves in order to trust in Jesus Christ* (OR, but rich people *can only* take pride *in the fact that God* will humble them *when he judges everyone* [IRO]), because they *and their riches* [MTY] will pass away, just like wild flowers *with* [SIM]. ¹¹ When the sun rises, the scorching hot wind dries plants, and their flowers fall and are no longer beautiful. Similarly, rich people will die [MET] while they are busy working, *leaving behind their riches*.

James 1:12

THEME: God blesses those who bravely endure difficulties; he will reward them by causing them to live eternally.

¹² God is pleased with the people who bravely/patiently endure difficulties. And when, *by bravely enduring difficulties*, they have proved *that they truly trust him*, he will give them *eternal* life. That is the reward [MET] that he has promised to give to those who love him.

James 1:13-15

THEME: *If people are tempted to do evil, they should not think that it is God who is tempting them. It is their own evil desires that are tempting them to do evil.*

¹³ If people are tempted to do what is evil, they should not think that it is God who is tempting them, because *God is totally/completely good*. He never tempts anyone to *do what is evil*, nor can he ever be tempted to *do anything* evil. ¹⁴ But people strongly desire to do what is evil [PRS], *and as a result* they are stimulated by those desires {those desires stimulate them} to want to do what is evil [PRS, DOU]. ¹⁵ Then, *because* they have desired [MET] to do what is evil [PRS], they begin to [MET] do [PRS] it. And when they have become ones who *habitually* do what is evil [MET], *if they do not turn away from their sinful behavior*, they will be separated from God forever.

James 1:16-18

THEME: *Stop thinking wrongly that God tempts you to do evil, because God does only good for us.*

¹⁶ My fellow believers whom I love, stop deceiving yourselves, *thinking that God does what is evil*. ¹⁷ *The truth is that God*, our heavenly Father [MTY], does only what is good [DOU] *for us, in order to help us become* all that he intends us to be. He is not like all the things *in the sky* that he created to give light, *because they change; that is, they do not shine the same all the time*. But God never changes. *He is always good*. ¹⁸ *And because he wanted to help us*, he gave us *spiritual* life as a result of our *trusting in his true message*. So now we have become the first ones of *all the people* [MET] that he created to *◀be totally dedicated to/completely belong to▶ him*.

James 1:19-20

THEME: *Every one of you should eagerly pay attention to God's message and should not speak hastily or be quick to get angry.*

¹⁹ My fellow believers whom I love, you know (OR, I want you to now) that every one of you should be eager to pay attention to *God's true message*. You should not hastily speak *your own thoughts*, nor be quick to get angry, ²⁰ because when any one of you gets angry, you will not be doing the righteous things that God *wants you to do*.

James 1:21-25

THEME: *So stop doing all kinds of evil, and do what God commands in his message, instead of just listening to it. God approves of those who do what he wants them to do.*

²¹ So stop doing all kinds of evil [DOU], and **humbly** accept (OR, submit to) the message that God planted in your *◀inner beings/hearts▶*, *because he is able to save you* [SYN] *if you accept his message*. ²² *Do what God commands in his message*. Do not only listen to it, *because people who only listen to it and do not obey it think wrongly that God will save them*. ²³ Some people hear God's message but do not do *what it says* [MET]. They are like someone who looks at his face in a mirror [SIM]. ²⁴ Although he looks at himself, he goes away *from the mirror* and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But other people look closely at God's message, which is perfect and which sets people free to *voluntarily do what God wants them to do*. And if they continue to *examine God's message* and do not just hear it and then forget it, but do *what God tells them to do*, God will bless them because of what they do.

James 1:26-27

THEME: *Those who show compassion on people in need and who do not think or act immorally are those who truly worship God and receive his approval.*

²⁶ Some people think that they worship God rightly, but they habitually speak evil talk [MTY]. Those people are wrong in thinking [SYN] *that they worship God rightly*. The fact is *that they worship God ◀in vain/uselessly▶*. ²⁷ *One of the things that God has told us to do* is to take care of orphans and widows who suffer hardship. *Those who do that and who do not think or act immorally like those who do not obey God* [MTY] truly [DOU] worship God, *who is our Father*, and God approves of them.

James 2:1-11

THEME: *Stop honoring some people more than others, because by doing that, you are disobeying God's law that we should love one another.*

2 ¹ My fellow believers, *because you trust our Lord Jesus Christ*, the one who is glorious/wonderful, stop honoring some people more than others. ² *For example*, suppose that a person who wears gold rings and fine clothes enters your meeting place. Then suppose that a poor person who wears shabby/ragged clothes also comes in. ³ And *suppose* that you *◀show special attention to/treat better▶* the one who is dressed in fine clothes by saying, "Sit here in this good seat!" and you say to the poor one, "Stand there or sit on the floor [MTY]!" ⁴ Then you have obviously [RHQ] caused divisions in the congregation (OR, you are clearly treating one better than the others, and you are using evil *motives/reasons* to *◀evaluate people/decide whether people are important or not▶*). ⁵ Listen to me, my fellow believers whom I love. God has

chosen [RHQ] poor people whom *unbelievers consider to possess nothing of value, in order that he might bless them abundantly because they trust in him*, and in order that they will enter the place where *he will rule [MET] forever*. That is what he has promised to those who love him. ⁶ But you dishonor the poor people. Think about it! <It is the rich people, *not the poor people*, who are causing you to suffer!/Isn't it the rich people, *not the poor people*, who are oppressing you?> [RHQ] <It is *the rich people* who forcibly take you to court *to accuse you in front of judges?*> [RHQ] ⁷ <And they are the ones who speak evil against Jesus Christ, the one who is worthy of *praise*, to whom you belong!/Are they not the ones who speak evil against Jesus Christ, the one who is worthy of *praise*, to whom you belong?> [RHQ] ⁸ *God has commanded you* in the Scriptures that each of you must love other people like you love yourself. That commandment was *also given by Jesus our King [MTY]*. If you are *loving others*, you are doing what is right. ⁹ But if you honor some people more than others, you are <doing wrong/sinning>. And because you *do not do what God commanded us to do*, he condemns you [PRS] because you disobey his laws.

¹⁰ Do not forget that those who disobey only one of God's laws, even if they obey all *his other laws*, *God considers them to be as guilty as anyone who has disobeyed all of God's laws*. ¹¹ For example, *God* said, "Do not commit adultery," but he also said, "Do not murder anyone." So if you(sg) do not commit adultery but you(sg) murder someone, you(sg) have become a person who disobeys *God's laws*.

James 2:12-13

THEME: *Continually act mercifully toward others, because God will not act mercifully to those who do not act mercifully toward others.*

¹² Continually speak and act *toward others* as people should who will be judged {whom *God will judge*} by the law that frees us *from being punished {God punishing us} for our sins*. ¹³ *Speak and act like that*, because when *God* judges us, he will not act mercifully toward those who do not act mercifully toward others. But when we are merciful to others, we can rejoice, because *our being merciful shows that we are acting like people whom God has mercifully saved from being judged (OR, we can rejoice because God will judge us mercifully)*.

James 2:14-17

THEME: *Anyone who says that he trusts in Jesus Christ but does not act compassionately toward others is not truly trusting in Jesus.*

¹⁴ My fellow believers, *there are some people who say*, "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," but they do not do good deeds to other people. <Their saying that will certainly not do them any good!/What good will their saying that do for them?> [RHQ] <God will certainly not save people like that who say that they believe, but do not do good deeds!/Will God save people like that who say that they believe, but do not do good deeds?> [RHQ] ¹⁵ *To illustrate*, suppose that fellow believers, either men or women, are continually lacking clothing or lacking food for each day. ¹⁶ And suppose that one of you says to them, "May *God* bless you and supply the clothing and food that you need!" but you(sg) do not give them the things that they need. <That would be no help to them!/What help is that to them?> [RHQ] ¹⁷ Similarly, *those who do not do good deeds to help others, what they have said about their believing in Christ is as useless [MET] as a dead person is useless!* They do not really believe in Christ.

James 2:18-26

THEME: *But someone may claim that some people are saved because they trust in God and other people are saved because they do good to others. In answer to that, the inadequacy of faith without good deeds is demonstrated by the example of demons. From the examples of Abraham and Rahab we can see that only by obeying God and doing good to others can people prove that they truly trust in God.*

¹⁸ But someone may say to me, "God saves some people only because they trust in him, and he saves others because they do good deeds to people." I would answer that person, "You(sg) can not prove to me that people truly trust in God if they do not do good deeds to others! But by doing good deeds to others I will prove to you that I truly trust in God!" ¹⁹ *Think about it!* You believe that there is only one God, and you are right to believe that. But the demons also believe that, but they tremble because they know that *God is going to punish them*. ²⁰ Also, you foolish person, I will [RHQ] prove to you(sg) that if someone says, 'I trust in God,' but he does not do good deeds, *what that person says will not benefit him*. ²¹ <It was certainly because of what our revered ancestor Abraham did, when he prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac, that he was considered by God {that God considered him} to be a righteous, obedient person./Was it not because of what our revered ancestor Abraham did, when he prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac, that he was considered by God {that God considered him} to be a righteous, obedient person?> [RHQ] ²² You(sg) can realize that he was not only trusting in God, but he was also doing *what God told him to do*, and you(sg) can realize that he was able to trust in God more completely because of having done *what God told him to do*. ²³ And so it happened as it is written in the Scriptures: 'Because Abraham truly trusted in God, he was considered by God to be {God considered that he was} righteous.' And God also said about Abraham, "He is my friend." ²⁴ From the example of Abraham, you can realize that it is because people do good deeds that God considers them to be righteous, and not **only** because they trust in him. ²⁵ Similarly, it was certainly [RHQ] because of what Rahab did, that God considered her to be a righteous, obedient person. Rahab was previously a

prostitute, but she cared for the Israelite men who came to *<spy out the land/see what that area was like>* and she *helped them to escape by sending them home on a different road from the one that they came on.*

²⁶ Remember that when our spirits *permanently leave our bodies, our bodies are dead and useless.* Similarly [SIM], if someone says, "I trust in God," but does not do *things to help others, what that person says about trusting in God is useless.*

James 3:1-12

THEME: *Not many of you should become teachers, because God will judge teachers with greater severity than he will judge others. You should all strive to speak rightly, because what you say has a powerful effect on others, and it is often destructive and hypocritical.*

3 ¹ My fellow believers, not many of you should *desire to become teachers of God's truth, because you know that God will judge us(exc), who teach others, more severely than he will judge other people.* ² It is true that we **all** in many ways do what is wrong [MET]. But those who always [LIT] control what they say will be all that God intends/wants them to be. They will be able to control all their actions [MTY]. ³ *To illustrate*, if we put a *small metal* bit into the mouth of a horse in order to cause the horse to obey us, we can cause the horse to turn *and go where we want it to* [MET]. ⁴ Think also about ships. *Although* a ship may be very large and *although* it can be moved by strong winds {strong winds can move it}, by *turning* a very small *<rudder/steering paddle>* people can direct the ship wherever they want *it to go.* ⁵ Similarly, *although* our tongues are very small, *if we do not control them*, we can **harm many** people by what we proudly say [MTY]. Think *also* about how *just a small flame of fire* can cause a **large forest** (OR, **a large area of brushwood**) to burn.

⁶ *Just like a fire damages a forest* [MET], when we say things that are evil, *we harm many people.* What we say [MTY] reveals that there is much evil within us. What we say contaminates/defiles all that we think and do [PRS, MET]. *Just like a flame of fire easily causes the whole surrounding area* [MET] to burn, what we say [MTY] can cause *others* to want to do evil. It is the devil himself [MTY] who causes us to speak what is evil. ⁷ Indeed, although people are able to tame/control all kinds of wild animals, birds, reptiles and creatures that live in the water, and people have tamed/controlled them, ⁸ no person *<on his own/by himself>* is able to control what he says [MTY]. And when people speak evilly, *it shows that they are unstable/uncontrolled and wicked* [MTY]. As the poison of a *snake kills people*, [MTY] *we harm others* [MET] by what we say. ⁹ We use our tongue to praise God, who is our Lord and Father, but we also use our same tongue to ask God to do evil to people. *That is very wrong, because God made people like himself.* ¹⁰ We praise *God*, but with our same mouth we also ask for evil *things to happen to others.* My fellow believers, this should not be! ¹¹ *<Surely bitter water and good water do not come out of the same spring!/How can bitter water and good water come out of the same spring?>* [RHQ] ¹² My fellow believers, a fig tree cannot [RHQ] produce olives. Nor can [RHQ] a grapevine produce figs. Neither can a salty spring produce good *water.* *Similarly, we should speak only what is good, and we should not speak what is evil* [MET].

James 3:13-18

THEME: *If you are jealous of others and self-seeking, do not boast that you are wise. Instead, demonstrate that you are truly wise by doing good and by acting peaceably and compassionately toward others.*

¹³ If any of you thinks [RHQ] that *you are wise* and know much, you should always act in a good way to show people that your good deeds are the result of your *being truly wise.* Being wise *helps us to act gently toward others.* ¹⁴ But if in your *<inner beings/hearts>* you are intensely/very [MET] *<jealous/unhappy when you see that someone else is succeeding>* and always want to have what you want, regardless of what others want, you should not say *that you are wise, for by boasting like that*, you are saying that *<God's message/what God says about you>* is not true. ¹⁵ Those who have such *attitudes* are not wise [MTY] in the way that God *wants them to be.* Instead, they are only thinking and acting like *<ungodly people/people who do not please God>*. They think and act according to their own *evil* desires. They do what the demons *want them to do* (OR, they think and act as demons do). ¹⁶ *Keep in mind that* people who have such attitudes *<are unruly/do not submit to authority>* and *do* all kinds of evil things. ¹⁷ But *when people* are wise [PRS] in the way that **God** [MTY] *wants them to be*, they are pure in every way, which God considers to be very important. They also act peaceably towards *others*, they *<are considerate of/think about the rights and feelings of>* others, they are willing to yield to *the wishes of others*, they act compassionately *toward others*, and they do all kinds of good things *for others* [MET]. *How they treat others does not depend on <others' status/whether others are important or not>*, and they are sincere *in all they do.* ¹⁸ Those who act **peaceably** toward others cause the *others to also* act peaceably, with the result that they all live together *acting righteously* [MET].

James 4:1-3

THEME: *You are fighting among yourselves because of your evil desires, and you are never getting what you want because you pray with wrong motives.*

4 ¹ *<Now I will tell you why you are fighting among yourselves and quarreling with each other./Do you know why you are fighting among yourselves and quarreling with each other?>* [RHQ] It is [RHQ] because each of you *wants to do the evil things that you <enjoy doing/like to do>* [PRS]. You keep on wanting to do things that are opposed to *what God wants you*

to do. ²There are things that you *very much* desire to have, but you do not get *those things*, so you want to kill [HYP] *those who hinder you from getting them*. You desire what *other people have*, but you are unable to get *what you desire*, so you quarrel and fight *with one another* [HYP]. You do not have *what you desire* because you do not ask *God for it*. ³And even when you do ask *him*, he does not give you *what you ask for* because you are asking **for the wrong reason**. You are asking for things in order that you may use them just to **<enjoy yourselves/make yourselves happy>**.

James 4:4-6

THEME: *You are unfaithful to God and are behaving as evil people do, so you have become God's enemies, but he wants to help you. He opposes the proud, but he helps those who are humble.*

⁴Like a woman who is unfaithful to her husband, you are being unfaithful to God and not obeying him anymore [MET]. Those who are behaving as evil people do [MTY] (OR, Those who love *the evil pleasures of this world*) are hostile toward God. Perhaps you do not realize that [RHQ]. So those who decide to act as evil people do [MTY] become **enemies of God**. ⁵<Surely you do not think that **it is for no reason** that *God told us in the Scriptures* that he eagerly desires that his Spirit, who lives in us, will help us to love *God only!*/Do you think that **it is for no reason** that *God told us in the Scriptures* that he strongly desires that his Spirit, who lives in us, will help us to love *God only?*> [RHQ] God has a reason for desiring that. ⁶*It is because* he is kind to us and he wants very much to help us. That is why **<someone said/King Solomon wrote> in the Scriptures**, "God opposes **those who are proud**, but he helps those who are **humble**."

James 4:7-10

THEME: *So submit yourselves to God and resist the devil. Stop doing wrong and thinking wrong thoughts. Be sorry for having sinned. Humble yourselves before God, and he will honor you.*

⁷So submit yourselves to God. **<Resist the devil/Refuse to do what the devil wants>**, and as a *result* he will run away from you. ⁸Come near *spiritually* to God, and as a *result* he will come near to you. You who are sinners, stop doing what is wrong and do only what is good [SYN, MET]. You who cannot decide *whether you will* **<commit yourselves to God/obey God completely>**, stop thinking wrong thoughts, and think only pure thoughts [MTY]. ⁹Be sorrowful and weep/mourn [DOU] *because of the wrong that you have done*. Do not laugh [DOU], **<enjoying only what you selfishly/enjoying only what you yourselves> desire**. Instead, be sad *because you have done what is wrong*. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and as a *result* he will honor you.

James 4:11-12

THEME: *Stop speaking evil against one another and thus condemning each other. Only God has the right to condemn people.*

¹¹My fellow believers, stop speaking evil against one another, *because* those who speak evil against a fellow believer and thus condemn *one who is like a brother to them* are really speaking against the law that *God gave us to obey*. In this law, *God commanded* [MTY] *us to love others*, and those who speak evil against fellow believers, *it is as though* they are saying by *what they do* that we do not have to do what *God commanded*. If you(sg) say that you do not have to do what *God commanded*, you(sg) are not obeying *God's law*. Instead, you(sg) are claiming that you *have the authority* to condemn others. ¹²*But in fact*, there is only **one** who *has the authority* to tell *people* what is right to do and to condemn *them*, and that is *God*. He alone is able to save *people* or to destroy *people*. So, **<you(sg) certainly have no right to decide how God should punish other people./who are you to decide how God should punish other people?>** [RHQ]

James 4:13-17

THEME: *You should not boast about what you will do in the future, because life is transitory. Instead, you should plan to do whatever God wants you to do, because boasting about what you want to do, rather than considering the will of God, is sinful.*

¹³*Some of you* are *arrogantly* saying, "Today or tomorrow we will go to a certain city. We will spend a year there and we will buy and sell things and earn a lot of money." Now, you listen to me! ¹⁴*You should not talk like that, because* you do not know what will happen tomorrow, and you do not know *how long* you will live! Your life is *short* [MET], *like* a mist that appears for a short time and then disappears. ¹⁵Instead of *what you are saying*, you should say, "If the Lord wills/desires, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶But what you are doing is boasting about all the things that you *arrogantly plan to do*. Your boasting like that is evil.

¹⁷So if anyone knows the right thing that he should do, *but* he does not do it, he is **sinning**.

James 5:1-6

THEME: *The rich people who oppress you should weep because they will suffer much. God will punish them because they have unjustly caused others to suffer.*

5 ¹Now *I have something to say* to the rich people who do not believe in *Christ* and who **<oppress you/cause you to suffer>**. Listen to *me*, you rich people! You should weep and wail *loudly* [DOU] because you will experience terrible

troubles [PRS]! ²Your wealth of various kinds is worthless [MET], as though it were rotted. Your fine clothes are worthless [MET], as though termites had ruined them. ³Your gold and silver are worthless [MET], as though they were corroded. When God judges you, this worthless wealth [MTY] of yours will be evidence [PRS] that you are guilty of being greedy, and as rust and fire destroy [MET, SYN] things, God will severely punish you [SIM]. You have <in vain/uselessly> <stored up/accumulated> wealth in a time when God is about to judge you [MTY]. ⁴Think about what you have done. You have not paid wages to the workmen who have harvested your fields for you, with the result that [PRS] those reapers are crying out to God for him to help them. And God, the all-powerful Lord, has heard their loud cries. ⁵You have lived luxuriously, just to have pleasure here on earth. Just like cattle fatten themselves, not realizing that they will be slaughtered [MET], you have lived just for pleasure [MTY], not realizing that God will severely punish you. ⁶You have arranged for others/judges to condemn innocent people. You have arranged for others to kill some people. And even though those people had not done anything wrong, they were not able to defend themselves against you. My fellow believers, that is what I say to the rich people <who oppress you/cause you to suffer>.

James 5:7-11

THEME: So wait patiently for the Lord Jesus Christ to return and to judge all people fairly. Do not complain against each other, lest Jesus judge you when he returns. From the examples of the prophets and Job, we know that God blesses and rewards those who patiently endure suffering.

⁷So, my fellow believers, although rich people cause you to suffer, be patient until the Lord Jesus Christ comes back. Remember that when farmers plant a field, they wait for their valuable crops to grow. They must wait patiently for the rain that comes at the planting season and for more rain that comes just before the harvest season. They wait for the crops to grow and mature before they can harvest them. ⁸Similarly, you also should wait patiently and trust the Lord Jesus firmly, because he is coming back soon and will judge all people fairly. ⁹My fellow believers, do not complain against each other, in order that you will not be condemned and punished by the Lord Jesus {in order that the Lord Jesus will not condemn you}. It is he who will judge us, and he is ready to appear. ¹⁰My fellow believers, as an example of how to be patient, <consider/think about> the prophets whom the Lord God sent long ago to speak his messages [MTY]. Although people caused them to suffer much, they endured it patiently. ¹¹And we know that God <approves of/is pleased with> those who endure suffering for him. You have also heard about Job. You know that although he suffered much, the Lord God finally brought good to Job because he endured that suffering (OR, because he continued to trust God). And from that we know that the Lord is very compassionate and kind.

James 5:12

THEME: Do not say, "If I am lying, may God punish me." Instead, always tell the truth, lest God condemn you.

¹²Also, my fellow believers, I want to say something important about how you talk. If you say that you will do something, do not say, "If I do not do it, may God in heaven [MTY] punish me." Do not even say, "If I do not do it, may someone here on earth [MTY] punish me." Do not say anything like that. Instead, if you say 'Yes,' then do what you said that you would do. If you say 'No,' then do not do it. Otherwise, God will condemn you.

James 5:13-18

THEME: Whatever your circumstances are, pray, trusting in God, and he will certainly help you, both physically and spiritually. So confess your sins to each other and pray for each other, because God answers prayer.

¹³Whoever among you is experiencing trouble [RHQ] should pray that God would help him. Whoever is cheerful/happy [RHQ] should sing songs of praise to God. ¹⁴Whoever among you is sick [RHQ] should call the leaders of the congregation to come to pray for him. They should put olive oil on him and, with the Lord's authority [MTY] (OR, calling on the Lord to heal him), pray. ¹⁵And if they truly trust in the Lord when they pray [PRS], the sick person will be healed. The Lord will heal him. And if that person has sinned <in a way that caused him to be/and because of that he became> sick, if he <confesses what he did/says that he did what is wrong>, he will be forgiven {the Lord will forgive him}. ¹⁶So, because the Lord is able to heal the sick and to forgive sins, tell each other the sinful things that you have done, and pray for each other in order that you may be healed {that God may heal you} physically and spiritually. If a righteous person prays and asks fervently for God to do something, God will act powerfully and will certainly do it. ¹⁷Although the prophet Elijah was <an ordinary person/just a human being> like us, he earnestly prayed that it would not rain. As a result, it did not rain for three and a half years. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, asking God to send rain, and as a result God [MTY] sent rain, and plants grew and produced crops again.

James 5:19-20

THEME: If anyone turns away from God's true message, you believers should urge him to once again obey God so that God will forgive his many sins.

¹⁹My fellow believers, if anyone of you stops obeying the true message from God, someone from among you should persuade that person to once again do what God has told us to do. If he stops doing what is wrong, ²⁰the one who persuaded him should realize that because he has enabled the person who was sinning to stop doing what is wrong, God will save that person from <spiritual death/being separated from him forever>, and will forgive his many sins.

The Apostle Peter wrote letters to his fellow believers. We call this letter 1 Peter

1 Peter 1:1-2

THEME: I, Peter, am writing this letter to Jewish believers who have been scattered throughout five provinces in Asia Minor. I wish them God's blessings.

1 ¹I, Peter, who have been appointed by Jesus Christ {one whom Jesus Christ has appointed} to be an apostle, am writing this letter to you believers whom God has chosen to belong to him. You are living in the Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Just like the Jews who lived in Israel long ago were scattered to other countries far from their homes [MET], you now live far from heaven, which is your true home. ²God our Father chose you according to what he himself decided previously, and his Spirit has set you apart in order that you would obey Jesus Christ, and in order that just like Moses sprinkled the Israelites with blood when God established the old covenant [MET], Jesus would establish his new covenant with you with the blood that flowed from his body when he died. May God act very kindly to you, and may he give you much inner peace.

1 Peter 1:3-12

THEME: God has done great things for you. Although you are now enduring trials to test your faith, you are rejoicing about your salvation. That salvation is something that the prophets who lived long ago did not fully understand.

³Praise God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! It is because of his great mercy to us that he has given us new life [MET]. Because he has caused Jesus Christ to become alive again after he died, he has enabled us to live very confidently; that is, to fully expect to receive the things that God/he has promised to give us. ⁴He has enabled us to expect to receive an absolutely imperishable/indestructible [TRI] inheritance that has been {that God has} preserved in heaven for us. ⁵God, by his mighty power, is guarding you as you trust in Jesus. He is keeping you safe so that he may, at the end of the time in which we now live (OR, when Jesus returns), completely deliver you from Satan's power. ⁶You rejoice because of what will happen then, but now you are grieving for a short time while God is allowing you to be tested {various things to test you [MET]}, as precious metals are tested {someone tests precious metals} to see if they are pure. These trials that you are experiencing are necessary ⁷to prove that you really do trust in Jesus. His proving that will be more valuable than gold, which does not last forever even though it is purified by being put {someone tries to make it pure by putting it} in a hot fire. As a result of your passing the test and proving that you really do trust in Jesus, God will honor you very highly [TRI] when Jesus Christ comes again. ⁸You love Jesus, although you have not seen him. Although you do not see him now, you rejoice very much [DOU] ⁹because you are experiencing the result of your believing in him; that is, God is saving you [SYN] from the guilt of your sins.

¹⁰As for those who long ago spoke messages that God had revealed to them about how God would act kindly toward you in ways which you did not deserve, they <investigated very carefully/tried very hard to learn> [DOU] about how God would save you. ¹¹They wanted to know whom the Spirit of Christ that was in them was referring to, and what time he was talking about, when he told beforehand that the Messiah would suffer and die, and that glorious/wonderful things would happen to him and to us afterwards. ¹²It was revealed to {God told} them that it was not for their own sake that he was revealing these things to them, but that it was for your sake. It was these things that were proclaimed to you by those who told you the message about Christ {that those who told you the message about Christ proclaimed to you}. They proclaimed them to you because the Holy Spirit whom God sent from heaven enabled them to do that. And even angels would like to know more about these truths about how God saves us.

1 Peter 1:13-25

THEME: You must live holy and reverent lives and love each other, because Christ has bought you and given you a new life.

¹³Therefore, prepare your minds [MET] as people fasten their belts around their waists to prepare to work. What I mean is that you should <discipline your minds/control what you think about>, and by doing that conduct your lives fully and confidently expecting to receive the good things that God will kindly do for you when Jesus Christ returns from heaven. ¹⁴And because you should obey your heavenly Father [SIM], as children ought to obey their fathers here on earth, do not do the evil deeds that you used to desire to do when you did not know God's truth. ¹⁵Instead, just like God, the one who chose you to belong to him, is <holy/separate from evil>, you also must be <holy/separate from evil> in everything that you do, ¹⁶because it is {someone/Moses has} written in the Scriptures that God said, "You must be <holy/separate from evil> because I am <holy/separate from evil>."

¹⁷God is the one who <impartially/without favoritism> judges what each one does. Since you call him 'Father,' conduct yourselves <reverently/with great respect for him> during the time that you are living here on earth. While you are living here, you are like exiles/foreigners [MET] because you are away from heaven, which is your true home. ¹⁸Live reverently

because you know that it was not with things that will not last forever, things like gold and silver, that *God* bought you to free you from your useless life-style that you learned from your ancestors. ¹⁹ Instead, *it was* with the precious blood of Christ *that flowed from his body when he died that God bought you. Christ's death was a perfect sacrifice for us* [MET], *like* the lambs that *the Jewish priests sacrificed were* perfect, without any blemishes/defects/flaws or spots [DOU]. ²⁰ He was chosen *by God* {*God chose him*} before the world was created {*he created the world*}. But it was not until now, when the time *in which we are living will soon* end, that *God* revealed him for your sake. ²¹ Because of what Christ has done, you are trusting in God, who caused him to become alive again after he died, and greatly honored him. As a result, God is the one in whom you are trusting and confidently expecting *that he will do great things for you*.

²² Because you have been made pure by obeying the truth, with the result that you sincerely love your fellow believers, continue to love each other earnestly and sincerely/wholeheartedly. ²³ *I ask you to do this, because you now have a new life* [MET]. It was not *by means of* something that will perish that you received this new life. Instead, it was *by means of* something that will last forever; that is, by *believing* the life-giving and enduring message of God. ²⁴ *We know that this is true* because, *as the prophet Isaiah wrote,*

All people *will perish* [SIM], *like grass perishes*.

And all the greatness/honor that people have *will not last forever,*
like the flowers [SIM] *that grow up* in the grass *do not last long*.

The grass withers and the flowers die,

²⁵ but God's message endures/lasts forever.

This message *that endures/lasts* is the message *about Christ* that was proclaimed to you.

1 Peter 2:1-10

THEME: *Do not act maliciously or be hypocrites. God is joining you together into a holy group indwelt by his Spirit, to do deeds that are pleasing to him.*

2 ¹ Therefore, do not act maliciously in any way or deceive others. Do not <be a hypocrite/try to make others think that you have qualities that you do not really have>, and do not <envy/be jealous of> others. Do not ever slander anyone. ² Just like newborn babies *long for their mothers' pure milk* [MET], you should long for *God's spiritual truth*, so that by learning it you may become *spiritually* mature. *You need to* do this until the day when God *will* free you completely *from all the evil in this world*. ³ *Also, you need to do this* because you have experienced that the Lord *acts in* a good way toward you.

⁴ You have come to the Lord Jesus. He is *like an important* stone [MET] *put in the foundation of a building, but he is* living, *not lifeless like a stone*. He was rejected by *many* people {*Many people rejected him*}, but God chose him and *considers him* to be very precious. ⁵ *And like men* build houses with stones [MET], *God* is causing you to be joined together into a group in which *God's Spirit lives*, in order that you, because of what Jesus Christ *did for us*, might, *like* priests *who offer sacrifices, do deeds* that are pleasing to God. ⁶ *What Isaiah wrote* in the Scriptures *shows us that this is true. He wrote these words that God said,*

Note this well: I am placing in Jerusalem [MTY] *one who is like* [MET] an extremely valuable [DOU] <stone/cornerstone, the most important stone in the structure of a building>, and those who believe in him will never be disappointed.

⁷ Therefore, *God will* honor you who believe in *Jesus*. But those who *refuse to* believe in him *are like the builders* that this Scripture *talks about,*

The stone that the builders rejected has become <the cornerstone/the most important stone in the foundation of the building>.

⁸ *And it is also written* {*Isaiah wrote*} *in the Scriptures:*

He will be like a stone that causes people to stumble,
and like a rock that people trip over.

Just as people are injured when they stumble over a rock,
people who disobey the message *about Jesus are injured spiritually,*
and that is what *God* determined would happen to them.

⁹ But you are people whom God has chosen *to belong to him*. You are *a group that represents God like* priests do, and you rule with God [MET] like kings. You are <a holy group of people/a group of people who are separate from evil>. You are people who belong to God. This is in order that you might proclaim the virtues of *God. He has* called you from *your former ways, when you were ignorant of his truth*, into the marvelous *understanding that he gives us* [MET]. *That is, he has called you out of spiritual* darkness into *spiritual* light. ¹⁰ *What the prophet Hosea wrote is true of you,*

Formerly, you were not a people *who had a relationship with God,*
But now you are God's people.

At one time *God* had not acted mercifully toward you,
But now he has acted mercifully toward you.

1 Peter 2:11-12

THEME: *Avoid obeying your self-directed natures. Conduct your lives in a good way among unbelievers.*

¹¹You people whom I love, I urge you to consider that you are like foreigners [MET, DOU] whose *real home is in heaven*. As a result, avoid doing the things that your self-directed nature desires, because those desires <fight against/always oppose> your souls. ¹²Keep conducting your lives in a good way among those who do not know God. *If you do that*, although they may accuse you, saying that you are people who do what is evil, they will see your good behavior, and at the time when God comes *to judge people*, they will <give honor to him/say that what he does is right>.

1 Peter 2:13-17

THEME: *Submit yourselves to human authorities, and act as servants of God should.*

¹³For the sake of the Lord *Jesus*, submit yourselves to every human authority. That includes submitting yourselves to the king, who is the most important authority, ¹⁴and to governors, who are sent by the king {whom the king sends} to punish those who do what is wrong and to commend/honor those who do what is right. ¹⁵What God wants is that by your doing *only* what is good you will cause that foolish people who do not know *God* will be unable to say things <to condemn you/to show you why you should be punished>. ¹⁶Conduct your lives as though you were free *from having to obey authorities*, but do not think 'Because I am free from having to obey authorities, I can do what is evil.' Instead, act as servants of God *should*. ¹⁷Act respectfully toward everyone. Love all your fellow believers. Revere God, and honor the king.

1 Peter 2:18-25

THEME: *You slaves must submit yourselves to your masters, even if they mistreat you. Imitate Christ in the way in which he suffered unjustly.*

¹⁸You slaves *who are believers*, submit yourselves to your masters and completely respect them. Submit yourselves not only to those who *act in a good and kind* [DOU] way towards you, but also submit yourselves to those who *act in a harsh way towards you*. ¹⁹You should do that because God is pleased with those who, knowing that he is aware of what is happening to them, endure the pain that they suffer *because of being treated unjustly by their masters* {their masters have treated them unjustly}. ²⁰God will certainly not [RHQ] be pleased with you if you do something that is wrong and as a result you are beaten {someone beats you}! But if, instead of doing wrong, you do what is good, and as a result of that, you suffer for doing what is good, and you endure that suffering, God will <commend/be pleased with> you. ²¹One of the reasons why God chose you is that you would *suffer*. When Christ suffered for you he became an example for you, in order that you would <imitate what/do like> he did. ²²*Remember how Christ conducted himself*,

He never sinned,

And he never said [MTY] anything to deceive *people*.

²³When *people* insulted him, he did not insult them in return.

When people caused him to suffer, he did not threaten <to get revenge/to cause them to suffer>.

Instead, he *decided to let God, who always judges justly*, prove that he <was innocent/had done nothing that is wrong> (OR, he left his case in the hands of *God, who always judges justly*).

²⁴He himself endured *the punishment for our sins* in his body *when he died* on the cross,

in order that we would stop sinning (OR, no longer respond to sinful desires) and start living righteous *lives*.

It is because he was wounded {they wounded him} that your *souls have been saved* [MET] *from being sinful, as people's bodies are healed from being sick*. ²⁵Truly you were like sheep that had gone astray [SIM], but now you have returned to *Jesus*, who cares for your souls as a shepherd *cares for his sheep* [MET].

1 Peter 3:1-6

THEME: *You women should submit yourselves to your husbands, even if they are not believers, and make your <inner beings/hearts> beautiful with qualities that will not fade away.*

3 ¹You women *believers*, just like *slaves should submit themselves to their masters*, submit yourselves to your husbands. Do that in order that if any of them do not believe the message *about Christ*, they may become believers without *it being necessary for you to say anything to them about their relationship to God*. ²*They will believe in Christ* when they see that you respect them and that your way of life is pure. ³Do not be *trying to make yourselves beautiful* by decorating the outside of your *bodies*, such as <by the way you comb your hair/by your hair style> or by wearing gold jewelry and fine clothes. ⁴Instead, make your <inner beings/hearts> *beautiful* with qualities/attitudes that will not fade away. Specifically, have a humble and quiet/calm attitude, which is something that God considers to be very valuable. ⁵<The devout women/The women who habitually worshipped God> who lived long ago and who trusted in God made themselves beautiful *by having attitudes* like that, and by being submissive to their husbands. ⁶Sarah, for example, obeyed *her husband* Abraham and called him 'my master'. You will be *as though you are* [MET] her daughters if you do what is right and are not afraid of *what your husbands or anyone else may do to you because you are believers*.

1 Peter 3:7

THEME: *You men must live in an appropriate way with your wives, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.*

⁷You men *who are believers*, just like your wives should respect you, you should conduct your lives in an appropriate way with them. Treat them respectfully, realizing that they are *usually* weaker than you are, and realizing that <they share with you/both of you have> the gift *that God has kindly given to you, which is eternal life*. Do this so that nothing will hinder you from praying (OR, hinder God <from answering/from doing what you ask for> when you pray).

1 Peter 3:8-12

THEME: *Agree with each other, love each other, be humble, and bless those who do evil to you instead of retaliating.*

⁸To end *this part of my letter*, I say to all of you, agree with each other *in what you think*. Be sympathetic *toward each other*. Love *each other* as members of the same family *should*. Act compassionately *toward each other*. Be humble. ⁹*When people do* evil things to you or insult you, do not <retaliate/repay them by> doing evil things to them or insulting them. Instead, *ask God to bless them*, because that is what you have been chosen *by God* {what God called you} to do, in order that you may receive a blessing *from him*. ¹⁰*Consider what the Psalmist wrote about the proper way of conducting our lives*,

As for those who want <to enjoy life/to live happily> and experience good *things happening to them every day*, they must not speak [MTY] what is evil or speak [MTY] words that deceive others.

¹¹They must continually turn away from *doing* evil, and must do what is good *instead*.

They must deeply desire to enable *people to act* peacefully toward each other;

they must zealously *urge people to act* in a peaceful way,

¹²because the Lord sees [MTY] what righteous people do *and he appreciates/likes what they do*.

He listens to righteous people when they pray *and he answers them*.

But he is [MTY] opposed to those who do evil.

1 Peter 3:13-22

THEME: *Do good to others, even if you suffer for doing it, as Christ did.*

¹³If you <are eager/try very hard> to do good deeds, <most people will not harm you./who will harm you?> [RHQ] ¹⁴But even if you suffer because of *doing* what is right, *God will bless you*. *Do as Isaiah wrote*: 'Do not be afraid of people who <threaten you/say things to cause you to be afraid of what they might do to you>, and do not worry about [DOU] what they *might do to you*.' ¹⁵Instead, acknowledge in your <inner beings/hearts> that Christ is the one who is in complete control of *your lives*. Always be ready to answer everyone who demands that you tell them about what you confidently expect *God to do for you*. ¹⁶But answer them humbly and respectfully, and make sure that you <do/have done> nothing wrong, in order that those who speak evil about you may be ashamed when they see the good way in which you are conducting yourselves because of your relationship with Christ. ¹⁷*It may be that God wants you to suffer*. But it is better to do good deeds, *even you suffer for doing them*, than to do evil deeds and suffer *for doing that*. ¹⁸*I say that* because Christ died once for the sake of people who have sinned. He was a righteous person who died for unrighteous people. He died in order that <he might bring us to/we might begin an intimate relationship with> God. *During the time that he had* an ordinary body, he was killed {people killed him}, but *God's Spirit* caused him to become alive again. ¹⁹The Spirit also helped him as he went to proclaim *God's victory to the evil spirits* whom God had imprisoned *in the heavens* (OR, to the spirits of those who *had died, and who* were in the place where the spirits of dead people are). ²⁰Long ago, during the time that Noah was building a big boat, *those evil spirits* disobeyed God when he waited patiently [PRS] *to see if people would turn from their evil behavior*. Only a few people were saved {*God saved only a few people*} *in that boat*. Specifically, *God brought only eight persons safely through the waters of the flood, while all the others drowned in it*. ²¹That water, *by means of which eight people were saved when God punished the other people* [MET], represents *the water in which we are baptized to show that God has saved us from God punishing us*. The water in which we are baptized does not remove dirt from our bodies. Instead, *it shows that* we are requesting *God to assure us* that he has removed our guilt *for having sinned*. And because Jesus Christ became alive again after he died, *we know that God accepted his sacrifice for us and because of that was able to remove our guilt*. ²²Christ has gone into heaven and is ruling [MTY] in the place of highest honor <next to God/at God's side>, after *God caused all the evil and powerful spirit beings* [DOU] to be made subject to him.

1 Peter 4:1-6

THEME: *Think as Christ did when he suffered, and conduct your lives as God wants you to, not doing the immoral things that you used to do.*

4 ¹Therefore, because Christ suffered in his body, you also must think the way that he did *when he was willing to suffer*, because those who suffer in their bodies *because of belonging to Jesus* have stopped sinning *the way they used to sin*. ²As a result, during their remaining time here on earth, they do not do the things that sinful people desire to do, but instead they do the things that God wants them to do. ³*I say that to you* because [SAR] you have already spent too much of your time *here on earth* doing what the people who do not know God like to do. In the past you committed all kinds of sexually immoral acts [DOU], you got drunk and then participated in <orgies/wild parties> and carousing/revelry, and you

worshipped idols, which is very displeasing to God. ⁴ Because you used to do those things, your friends are surprised that you do not join with them any more when they participate in that kind of wild behavior that *<is rushing to/will quickly> destroy them like* [MET] a flood. As a result, they speak evil about you. ⁵ But God is ready to judge the people who are living *now* and the people who have died, and he is the one who will decide whether he approves of what they have done. ⁶ That is the reason why the message *about Christ* was preached {people preached the message *about Christ*} to believers who have now died. *That message was preached to them* in order that even though *sinful* people might judge them and say that they are guilty, God's Spirit would enable them to live eternally.

1 Peter 4:7-11

THEME: *Keep thinking sensibly. Love each other earnestly. Provide hospitality to others. Use your spiritual gifts well. Do kind deeds with all the energy that you have.*

⁷ It is almost the time when all things on this earth will come to an end. Therefore, keep thinking sensibly/reasonably and control what you think [DOU], so that you can pray *clearly*. ⁸ Most important of all, love each other earnestly/wholeheartedly, because if we love others [PRS], we will just ignore many of the sinful things that *they do to us*. ⁹ Provide food and a place to sleep for those *who come to your community, and do it* without complaining. ¹⁰ Believers should all use the spiritual gifts that God has given them to serve others. They should manage/use well the various gifts that God has kindly given them. ¹¹ Those who speak *to the congregation* should do that as though they are speaking the very words of God. Those who do kind deeds to others should do it with the strength that God gives them, in order that God may be honored by all this {that all this may honor God} as Jesus Christ *enables us to do it. I pray that we will praise God* (OR, *Jesus*) and give him the authority to *rule over us* forever. *<May it be so!/Amen!>*

1 Peter 4:12-19

THEME: *Do not be surprised about your sufferings for being Christians, and do not be ashamed when that happens. Instead, commit yourselves to God.*

¹² You whom I love, do not be surprised about the painful things that you are suffering *because you belong to Christ*. Those things are *testing you as metals are tested by people putting them* in a fire. Do not think that something strange is happening to you. ¹³ Instead, rejoice that you are suffering the same kinds of things that Christ endured. Rejoice when you *suffer*, in order that you may also be very glad [DOU] when Christ returns and reveals how glorious/wonderful he is. ¹⁴ If you are insulted {If *people* insult you} because you believe in Christ [MTY], *God is* pleased with you, because it shows that the Spirit of God, the Spirit who *reveals how great God is*, lives within you. ¹⁵ If you suffer, do not let that suffering be the result of your being a murderer or a thief or as a result of doing some other evil deed, or as a result of interfering in someone else's affairs. ¹⁶ But if you suffer because of being a Christian, do not be ashamed about it. Instead, praise God that you are suffering because of belonging to Christ [MTY]. ¹⁷ I say that, because it is now time for God to begin judging people, and first he will judge those who belong [MTY] to him. Since he will judge us believers first, think about the terrible things that will happen to [RHQ] those who do not obey the good message that comes from him! ¹⁸ *That will be as it is written in the Scriptures,*

Many righteous people will have to suffer many difficult trials before going to heaven.

So ungodly and sinful people will surely have to suffer much severe punishment from God!

¹⁹ Therefore, those who suffer because of its being God's will that they suffer *because of being Christians* should commit themselves to God, the one who created them and the one who always does what he promises to do. And they should continue to do what is right.

1 Peter 5:1-7

THEME: *You elders must care for your congregations with enthusiasm, not being greedy for money or acting like bosses. Instead, be examples to them.*

5 ¹ Now I will say this to those among you who are elders in the congregations: I also am an elder. I am one of those who saw Christ when he suffered, and I am also one who will share some of the glory/greatness that Christ has in heaven. ² I appeal to you elders to take care of the people who are in your congregations [MET] as shepherds *take care of their* flocks of sheep. Do this, not because you must do it, but instead do it willingly, as God desires. Do not be greedy to get a lot of *money for doing it*, but instead do it enthusiastically/wholeheartedly. ³ Do not act like domineering *bosses over* the people [MET] whom God has assigned/entrusted to you, but instead be examples to them by the way in which you conduct your lives. ⁴ If you do that, when Jesus, who is *like* our chief shepherd [MET], appears, he will give each of you a *glorious/wonderful reward* [MET]. *That reward will be like* the wreaths that are given to *victorious athletes*, but your reward will never wither *like wreaths do*.

⁵ Now I will say this to you young men and women. Just like married men and women are *<to be subject/to submit themselves>* to their spouses, you must *<be subject/submit yourselves>* *<to the older men/to the leaders>* of the congregation. And all of you *believers* should act [MET] humbly toward each other, because *this proverb is true,*

God opposes people who are proud,

but he acts kindly toward those who are humble.

⁶Therefore, realizing that God has great power [MTY] *to punish proud people*, humble yourselves in order that he may honor you at the time that *he has determined*. ⁷Because he takes care of you, let him take care of all the things that you are worried/concerned about.

1 Peter 5:8-11

THEME: *Resist the devil by always being alert and trusting in Christ's message, remembering that believers everywhere are also suffering as you are.*

⁸Always be alert with your full attention, because the devil, who is your enemy, is going/sneaking around, looking for people *to destroy*. *He is* like [SIM] a lion who roars as it prowls around, seeking someone to *kill and devour*. ⁹You must resist him by continuing to firmly trust in *Christ and his message*, remembering that your fellow believers all over the world are experiencing similar sufferings *that the devil is bringing to them*. ¹⁰God is the one who kindly helps us in every *situation*, and *he is the one* who chose us to share his eternal glory/greatness *in heaven* because of our relationship with Christ. *And* after you have suffered for awhile *because of things that people do to harm you*, he will remove your spiritual defects/imperfections, he will strengthen you *spiritually* [DOU], and he will support you *emotionally*. ¹¹*I pray/desire that he will rule* powerfully forever. <May it be so!/Amen!>

1 Peter 5:12-14

THEME: *I have written this short message to encourage you. The believers here, including Mark, greet you. May God give you inner peace.*

¹²Silas has written this letter *for me as I have* <dictated it to him/told him what to write>. I consider/know that he is a faithful fellow believer. I have written this short letter to you to encourage you, and I want to assure you that *what I have written* is a true message about the things that God kindly does for *us, things that we do not deserve*. Continue to firmly believe this message.

¹³In *this city that is sometimes referred to as 'Babylon'* [MET], the believers [SYN], whom *God* has chosen *to belong to him* just like he chose you, <send you(pl) their greetings/say that they are thinking affectionately about you>. Mark, who is [MET] *like* a son to me, also <sends you his greetings/says that he is thinking affectionately about you>. ¹⁴Greet each other with a kiss *on the cheek to show that you love each other*. *I pray that God will give inner peace* to all of you who have a relationship with Christ.

The Apostle Peter wrote letters to his fellow believers. We call this letter 2 Peter

2 Peter 1:1-2

THEME: I, Simon Peter, am writing this letter to you whom God has caused to believe in Christ just like we apostles believe in Christ. I pray that God will bless you greatly.

1 ¹I, Simon Peter, am writing this letter to you. I serve Jesus Christ, and am an apostle appointed by him. I am sending this letter to you whom God has caused to believe in Christ just like he caused us(exc) apostles to believe in Christ. You and we have <equally been given the/both been given the same> privilege of believing in Jesus Christ. He is God, he is righteous, he is the one whom we worship, and he is our Savior. ²I pray that God will continue to act very kindly towards you, and give you <a deep/very much> inner peace, because you truly know God and Jesus, who is our Lord.

2 Peter 1:3-4

THEME: God has given us everything that we need to receive eternal life and to live godly lives.

³God [PRS] has given us everything that we need in order that we might receive eternal life and in order that we might conduct our lives <in a godly way/in a way that pleases him>. He gives us that by the power that he has because he is God, and he has also given it to us as a result of our knowing him. He is the one who by his own glorious/wonderful and perfect nature chose us to be his people. ⁴By means of this glorious and perfect nature, he has promised us that he will do very great and <priceless/very precious> things for us. He has also promised to you that by believing what he has promised you will be able to act righteously, just like God acts righteously, and that you will be free from being morally depraved/corrupted, and that you will not be like those who do not believe in Christ and are morally depraved because of their desire to do what is evil.

2 Peter 1:5-11

THEME: Exert yourselves to the utmost to develop a stable Christian character.

⁵Because God has done all that, <by exerting yourselves strenuously/by trying very hard>, make sure that you not only believe in Christ, but that you are also living morally good lives. And make sure that you are not only living morally good lives, but that you also know what God desires (OR, behave wisely). ⁶And make sure that you not only know what God desires (OR, behave wisely) but that you also control what you say and do. And make sure that you not only control what you say and do, but that you are also steadfast. And make sure that you are not only <steadfast/patient when you suffer>, but that you are also godly. ⁷And make sure that you not only <are godly/conduct your lives in a way that pleases God>, but that you also have a concern for your fellow believers, as brothers and sisters ought to have for each other. And make sure that you not only have a concern for your fellow believers, but that you also love others. ⁸If you do these things, and if you do them more and more, that demonstrates that knowing our Lord Jesus Christ <is very effective/produces good results> [LIT] in your lives. ⁹If these qualities are not present in people, it means they are not aware that these things are important, just like a blind person is not aware of what is around him. They think only about earthly matters, just like [MET] a shortsighted person sees clearly only things that are near. It seems that they have forgotten that God has forgiven them for their former sinful lives. ¹⁰Instead of acting like those people, try to confirm/prove by the way you conduct your lives that you are among those whom God has chosen [DOU] to be his people. If you do that, you will certainly never become separated from God, ¹¹and God will very wholeheartedly welcome you into the place where our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will rule his people forever.

2 Peter 1:12-15

THEME: I intend to keep reminding you very frequently about these matters.

¹²I intend to keep on reminding you very frequently [HYP] about these matters, even though you already know them and are firmly convinced that they are true. ¹³I consider it right that I should help you to continually think about these matters by reminding you about them as long as I am alive [EUP], ¹⁴because I know that I shall die [EUP] soon, just like our Lord Jesus Christ clearly has revealed to me. ¹⁵Moreover, I will <make every effort/try hard> by writing these things down to enable you to remember them at all times after I have died [EUP].

2 Peter 1:16-21

THEME: *You can be sure that these matters are true, because we apostles ourselves witnessed that our Lord Jesus Christ is supremely great, and also because what the prophets say about him is completely reliable.*

¹⁶We apostles told you that our Lord Jesus Christ acts powerfully and that he is coming back *some day*. We were not basing *what we told you* on stories that we had cleverly <invented/made up>. Instead, we told you what we ourselves saw with our own eyes, that *the Lord Jesus is supremely great*. ¹⁷God, our Father, greatly honored him when God's great glory/brightness surrounded him, and God [MTY] said, "This is my Son, whom I love very much; I am very pleased with him." ¹⁸We(exc) ourselves heard God [MTY] say that from heaven, when we were with *Christ* on that holy/sacred mountain. ¹⁹We also have what the prophets *wrote about Christ long ago*, which is completely reliable/trustworthy. You should <pay attention to/think carefully about> *what they wrote*, because *what they wrote enables you to know whether what is taught to you is true or whether it is false* [SIM], like a lamp that is shining in a dark place *enables people to see where they are going* [SIM]. You should <pay attention to/think carefully about> *what they wrote until our Lord Jesus Christ comes back and enables you* [SYN] *to know God fully, which will be like when* [MET] <a day dawns/daylight comes> and the morning star rises *and we can see it clearly*. ²⁰It is important that you realize that no one can interpret/explain by himself *the meaning of what the prophets wrote in the Scriptures* without *the help of God's Spirit* (OR, no *part of the Scriptures* originated with the prophet himself),²¹ because no human beings decided *to make those prophecies*. On the contrary, those who spoke *messages from God* did that because it was the Holy Spirit who caused them to do *it, and therefore the Spirit must help us to interpret/understand their meaning*.

2 Peter 2:1-3

THEME: *There will be false teachers among you who will behave wickedly and who will entice you to behave just like they do. God will certainly destroy them.*

2 ¹Just like there were false prophets among the *Israelite people long ago*, so there will also be teachers of false *teachings* among you. They will enter *your congregations* without you realizing *what/who they are*, and they will *spiritually* injure some people by what they teach. Specifically, these teachers will even deny *that the Lord Jesus died to pay for the guilt of our sins*. As a result, they will soon destroy themselves *spiritually, and God will also punish them*. ²And many *people* will behave in an extremely immoral manner, imitating the extremely immoral manner in which *these teachers of false teaching* behave. As a result, *unbelievers* will <discredit the true message/say the true message is false>. ³Because *the teachers of false teaching* want a lot of things that other people have, *they think that* by telling you stories that they themselves have <made up/invented>, they will get money from you. *God decided long ago that he would punish them, and he has not fallen asleep* [LIT]! *He will certainly destroy them!*

2 Peter 2:4-10c

THEME: *It is certain that God knows how to rescue those who are godly, and that he knows how to keep those who are unrighteous until the time when he will punish them.*

⁴God destroyed [LIT] the angels who sinned. He threw them into the worst place in hell and imprisoned them *there* in darkness in order to keep them there until he judges *and punishes them*. ⁵He also got rid of [LIT] *the people who lived in* [MTY] the world long ago. He saved *only* eight of them, including Noah, who was a righteous preacher. God saved them when he destroyed by a flood *all <the ungodly people/the people whose lives were not pleasing to him> who were living then*. ⁶He also condemned Sodom and Gomorrah *cities*; that is, he destroyed them by burning them completely to ashes. *By doing that* he gave a warning to those who afterwards would live in <an ungodly manner/a manner that is displeasing to him>. ⁷But he rescued *Abraham's nephew*, Lot, who was a righteous *man*. *Lot* was <greatly distressed/very sad> because the people *in Sodom* were doing very immoral deeds. ⁸That righteous *man's* soul <was tormented/suffered great agony> day after day because he saw and heard those wicked people behave in a very lawless/wicked *manner when he was living among them*. ⁹And since the Lord God *rescued Lot, you can be sure that* he knows how to rescue <godly people/people whose lives please him> from their sufferings, and *he is able* to keep <ungodly people/people whose lives do not please him>, *whom he has started to punish even now, until the time when he will finish judging them and punish them*. ¹⁰*He will punish especially severely those ungodly teachers of false teachings* who do the things that their self-directed nature desires, things that <defile them/cause them to be impure in every way>. Those *teachers of false teachings* despise *all beings who rule over them*.

2 Peter 2:10d-16

THEME: *Because those teachers of false doctrine will behave wickedly and will entice people to do the same things that they do, God will destroy them.*

Because *those teachers of false teachings* are extremely arrogant/proud [DOU], they <are not afraid to insult/boldly speak evil about> glorious beings *in heaven* (OR, glorious/wonderful beings *who rule over people*). ¹¹In contrast, angels do not insult *those teachers* when those teachers accuse the angels while the Lord God is watching, even though the angels are much more powerful [DOU] *than the teachers of false teaching*. ¹²Because those *teachers of false doctrines* are like animals that cannot think *as humans do* [DOU], they say evil things about *spiritual* things concerning which they know

nothing. As a result, God will destroy them like *people* destroy *animals*, *animals* that are born only in order to be captured and destroyed {in order that *people* should capture and destroy them}.¹³ God will punish *those teachers* in return for the unrighteous actions/things that they have done. It even pleases them <to carouse/to drink and revel noisily> in the daytime as well as at night. And as they indulge/enjoy themselves just like they want to while they are feasting with you, they <defile you greatly/cause you to become impure>, as [MET] stains and blotches [DOU] *defile a clean garment*.¹⁴ They want to commit [MTY] adultery with every woman whom they look at. They never stop seeking opportunities to sin. They entice/persuade those who are *spiritually* unstable to join them in doing the sinful things that they do. Because of their ever-increasing <greed/desire to have more and more things>, they are doomed to eternal punishment.¹⁵ They have <rejected good moral standards/quit doing what everyone knows is right>. They have imitated what the prophet Balaam, the son of Bosor, did long ago. He, acting very unrighteously, wanted the enemies of the Jews to pay him if he asked God <to curse/to do bad thing to> the Jews.¹⁶ But God rebuked him for having done that which was wrong and for behaving very foolishly. And even though donkeys do not speak, God used a donkey to hinder Balaam by enabling it to speak to him with a human voice.

2 Peter 2:17-22

THEME: *Because those teachers of false doctrine will entice people to behave wickedly, God has reserved darkest hell for them.*

¹⁷ These teachers of false teachings mislead/deceive people by promising what they cannot do, as [MET] dried-up springs mislead/deceive people by causing them to expect to get water from them. They mislead/deceive people [MET] just like clouds that are blown along by strong winds mislead/deceive people by causing them to expect rain, but no rain falls. Therefore, God has reserved the darkness of hell for those teachers of false teachings.¹⁸ By boasting proudly as they make speeches that are worthless, they entice people who have recently become believers and have ceased to do the things that wicked people do. They entice them into sin by encouraging them to do the evil deeds that their self-directed nature urges them to do.¹⁹ The false teachers tell people that they are free to do whatever they want to do, even though they themselves are like slaves [MET] because their own self-directed nature forces them to do sinful deeds. Think about these well-known words: 'Whenever a person is controlled by something {something controls a person}, it is as though that person has become a slave of what controls him.'²⁰ Those teachers of false teachings learned about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As a result, they stopped doing those deeds that <defile people/cause people to become impure> spiritually. Since they have begun to do those evil deeds again, with the result that they are unable to stop doing such deeds, they are in a worse condition than they were in before they knew Jesus Christ.²¹ Because God will severely punish them, it would have been better for them if they had never known what it means to conduct their lives in a righteous manner. It is too bad that although they knew how to conduct their lives in a righteous manner, they rejected the things that God commanded people to do, the things that were taught to them <by us apostles/by Christ> {that <we apostles/Christ> taught to them}.²² The way in which they are behaving again is just like <the proverbs/what people often say>: They are like dogs that return to eat their vomit, and they are like pigs that have washed and then roll again in the mud.

2 Peter 3:1-2

THEME: *I am writing this letter to you in order to stimulate you to remember what the holy prophets said and what our Lord and Savior commanded.*

3 ¹ This letter that I am now writing to you whom I love, is the second letter that I have written to you. I have written both these letters to you in order that by reminding you about the things you already know, I may stimulate/cause you to think sincerely about those things.² I want you to remember the words that were spoken by the holy prophets {that the holy prophets spoke} long ago, and also to remember what our Lord and Savior commanded, things that we, your apostles, told you about.

2 Peter 3:3-10

THEME: *Although certain people will ridicule the idea that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to come back, the reason why he has not yet come back to judge people is that God is being patient with people; but Jesus will certainly come back and judge people.*

³ It is important for you to understand that in the time immediately before Christ comes back, there will be people who will ridicule the idea of his coming back. Those people will do whatever evil deeds they wish to do.⁴ They will say, "Although it was promised that Christ will come back, <nothing has happened that would indicate that he is coming back./what happened to the promise that he is coming back?> [RHQ] We say that because ever since the Christian leaders who lived long ago died [EUP], everything has remained the same. Things are as they always have been since God created the world!"⁵ They will say that because they <deliberately overlook the fact/have decided to ignore what they know> that God, by commanding long ago that it should be so, caused the heavens to exist, and he caused the earth to come up out of water and to be separate from the water.⁶ And God, by commanding that it should be so, later destroyed the world that existed at that time, by causing the earth to be flooded with water {water to flood the earth}.⁷ Furthermore, God, by commanding that it should be so, has set apart the heavens and the earth that exist now, and they are being kept {he is keeping them} until the time when he will judge <ungodly people/people whose lives are not pleasing to him>. And at that time he will destroy the heavens and the earth by burning them.⁸ Dear friends, I want you to understand well that the Lord God is willing to wait a long time to judge the people in the world! How much time passes before the Lord God judges the

people in the world does not matter to him! He considers that one day passes no more quickly than a thousand years, and he also considers that a thousand years pass as quickly as one day passes to us!⁹ Therefore, you should not think that because Christ has not yet come back to judge people, the Lord God is <delaying/slow to do> what he promised. Some people think that this is so, and they say that Christ never will come back. But you should understand that the reason why Christ has not yet come back to judge people is that God is being patient towards you, because he does not want anyone to be lost *eternally*. Instead, he wants everyone to turn away from their sinful behavior.¹⁰ Although *God is being patient*, at the time [MTY] that he has appointed, the Lord Jesus Christ will certainly come back to judge people. He will come back unexpectedly, like a thief [SIM] comes unexpectedly. At that time there will be a great roaring sound. The heavens will cease to exist. <The elements/The parts of which the universe consists> will be destroyed by fire, and the earth that God made and everything on it that people have made will disappear (OR, will be burned up).

2 Peter 3:11-13

THEME: *You certainly ought to behave in a godly manner, because God will destroy everything and because only those people who are righteous will live in the new heavens and on the new earth.*

¹¹ Because God will certainly destroy all these things like *I just said*, <you certainly know how you should behave./do you know how you should behave?> [RHQ] You should behave <in a godly manner/in a manner that pleases God>¹² while you eagerly/expectantly wait for Christ to return on the day that God has appointed/planned [MTY], and you should try to make that day come soon. Because of what God [PRS] will do on that day, the heavens will be destroyed. <The elements/The parts of which the universe consist> will melt and burn up.¹³ Although all those events/things will happen, we rejoice because we are waiting for the new heavens and new earth that God has promised. The only people who will be in the new heavens and on this new earth will be people who are [PRS] righteous.

2 Peter 3:14-18a

THEME: *Do all you can to conduct your lives in a godly manner. Guard against those who would entice you to doubt what you now firmly believe.*

¹⁴ Therefore, dear friends, because you are waiting for these things to happen, do all that you can to conduct your lives <in a godly manner/in a manner that pleases God>, in order that Christ will see that you are completely pure [DOU] and that you are living peacefully with each other.¹⁵ And think about this: Our Lord Jesus Christ is patient because he wants people to be saved. Our dear <brother/fellow believer> Paul also wrote wise words to you about these same matters, because God enabled him to understand these <events/things that will happen>.¹⁶ In the letters that Paul wrote there are certain things that are difficult for people to understand. People who are spiritually ignorant and <unstable/do not believe firmly in Christ> interpret these things wrongly, as they also <interpret/explain the meaning of> the other parts of the Scriptures wrongly. The result is that they will destroy themselves spiritually, and God will punish them.¹⁷ Therefore, dear friends, since you already know about these teachers of false teachings, <guard against them/beware>. Do not let these wicked people deceive you by telling you things that are wrong, with the result that you yourselves begin to doubt what you now firmly believe.¹⁸ Instead, live in such a manner that you experience more and more our Savior Jesus Christ acting kindly towards you, and that you get to know him better and better.

2 Peter 3:18b

THEME: *I pray that Jesus Christ will always be honored.*

I pray/desire that Jesus Christ will be honored both now and forever!^a

^a Some Greek manuscripts add "<Amen./So be it.>" at the end.

The Apostle John wrote a letter to his fellow believers. We call this letter 1 John

1 John 1:1-4

THEME: We apostles proclaim to you the message about the One who has lived eternally, so that you may be joined together with us and we may be completely happy.

1 ¹ I, John, am writing to you about the one who existed before *there was anything else!* He is the one whom we apostles listened to *as he taught us!* We saw him! We ourselves looked at him and touched him! *He is the one who taught us the message that enables people to have eternal life (OR, live spiritually).* ² Because he came here *to the earth* and we have seen him, we proclaim to you clearly that the one whom we have seen is the *one who has always lived.* He was *previously* with his Father *in heaven*, but he came to live among us. ³ We proclaim to you the *message about Jesus*, the one whom we saw and heard, in order that you may have a close relationship with us. The ones whom we have a close relationship with are God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ I am writing to you about these things so that *you will <be convinced/believe> that they are true, and as a result we may be completely joyful.*

1 John 1:5-2:2

THEME: We should continue to be morally pure, because God is morally pure and he is able to forgive our sins on the basis that Jesus died to acquit us of the guilt of all our sins.

⁵ The message that we heard from Christ and proclaim to you is this: God is *pure in every way. He never sins. He is like [MET] a brilliant light that has no darkness at all.* ⁶ If we claim to have a close relationship with God, but we *conduct our lives in an impure manner, that is like living [MET] in evil darkness.* We are not conducting our lives according to God's true message. ⁷ But living *in a pure manner, as God is living in a pure manner [MET] in every way, is like living in God's light.* If we do that, we have a close relationship with each other. Not only that, but God *<acquits us/removes the guilt> of all our sins because he accepts what his Son Jesus did for us when his blood flowed from his body when he died. So we should conduct our lives <according to God's standard of purity/in a pure manner according to what God says is pure>.* ⁸ Those who never behave sinfully are deceiving themselves, and refusing to *accept as true what God says about them.* ⁹ But God will do what he says that he will do, and what he does is *always right.* So, if we confess to him that we *have behaved sinfully, he will forgive us for our sins and <will free us from/remove> the guilt of all our sins. Because of that, we should confess to him that we have behaved sinfully.* ¹⁰ *Because God says that everyone has sinned, those who say/claim that they have never behaved sinfully talk as though God lies! They reject what God says about us!*

2 ¹ You who are very dear to me, I am writing this to you *to say, 'Do not sin!'* But if any of you *believers sins, God can forgive you because we have Jesus Christ, who is the righteous one, who speaks to the Father on our behalf and asks him to forgive us.* ² *Remember that Jesus Christ voluntarily sacrificed his own life for us, so that as a result God forgives our sins. Yes, God is able to forgive our sins, but not only ours! He is also able to forgive the sins of people everywhere!*

1 John 2:3-6

THEME: We should conduct our lives as Christ did, obeying what God commands us to do. We will then be loving God in the manner in which he wants us to.

³ *I will tell you how we can be sure that we <know/have a close relationship with> God. If we obey what he commands us to do, that shows us that we have a close relationship with him. So we must always obey what he commands us to do.* ⁴ Those who say, "We *<know/I have a close relationship with> God,*" and do not obey what God commands us to do, are liars. They are not conducting their lives according to God's true message. ⁵ But those who obey what God commands them to do are the people who love God in the manner in which he wants us to. *I will tell you how we can be sure that we have a close relationship with God:* ⁶ If we say that we are living as God wants us to, we should *conduct our lives as Christ did.*

1 John 2:7-11

THEME: We ought to love our fellow believers in order to continue behaving like people living in the light.

⁷ Dear friends, I am not writing a new *additional* command to you. Instead, I am writing to you a command which you have had since you first [MTY] *believed in Christ.* That command is *part of the message that you have always heard.* ⁸ Nevertheless, *I can say that the command I am writing to you is a new command. It is new because what Christ did was*

new, and what you are *doing* is new, because you have been ceasing to conduct your lives in a morally impure manner and are now truly conducting your lives in a pure manner. That is like [MET] no longer living in darkness. Instead, it is like living where a brilliant light is already shining.⁹ Those who claim that they are *pure in every way, like people* [MET] living in the light, but hate any of their fellow believers, are still *behaving in an impure manner, like* [MET] people who are continually living in darkness.¹⁰ But those who love their fellow believers are continuing to conduct their lives like people who are living in the light. They are people who please God [LIT]. So you should love your fellow believers.¹¹ But those who hate any of their fellow believers are still *conducting their lives in an impure way, like* [MET] people who are living in darkness. They do not know that they will eventually destroy themselves *eternally*. They have become *spiritually blind* [PRS, MET], *unaware of spiritual truth*.

1 John 2:12-14

THEME: *I am writing all these matters to you because I know that God has forgiven your sins and also because you have come to know the Father and Christ, who has always existed, and because you have overcome the evil one.*

¹²⁻¹³ I am writing *this* to you whom I love as though [MET] you were my little children, to you who are *spiritually mature people who are like* [MET] fathers, and to you *spiritually vigorous/strong people who are like* [MET] young men. Remember that your sins have been forgiven {God has forgiven your sins} on account of what Christ [MTY] *has done*. You now know *Christ, the one* who always existed. You have defeated the evil one, *Satan*.¹⁴ *I will say it again:* I have written *this* to you because you have come to know the Father, because you now know *Christ, the one* who always existed, because you are *spiritually strong*, because you continue to obey God's word, and because you have defeated the evil one, *Satan*.

1 John 2:15-17

THEME: *Do not esteem the evil manner in which other people in the world live, since you want to live forever.*

¹⁵ Do not desire to conduct your lives in the evil manner in which godless people in the world [MTY] conduct their lives, and do not love anything that *the evil people* in the world [MTY] consider to be good. Those who desire to conduct their lives in the evil manner in which other people of the world [MTY] conduct their lives do not really love God, their Father, at all.

¹⁶ Keep in mind that all *the evil human desires* in the world are actions/things such as these: People desire to do what their self-directed nature strongly desires. People desire to possess whatever <appeals to their senses/they see or hear about>. People boast about the material things that they possess. Such evil ways of living do not originate/come from the Father! Instead they originate/come from the <godless people in the world/people in the world who conduct their lives in a manner that displeases God> [MTY]!¹⁷ The *godless people* in the world [MTY], along with what they desire, will disappear, but those who do what God wants *them to do* will live forever!

1 John 2:18-25

THEME: *You know that it is now the final period of this age when there are liars who deny that Jesus is God's Chosen One. But you have the power of God's Spirit and you know what is true and what is false. So continue to live according to the true message that you heard when you began to believe in Christ, in order that you may continue to live united both to God's Son and to the Father.*

¹⁸ You who are very dear to me, it is now <the final part [MTY] of this age/the final period of time before Jesus returns>. Just like you heard from us apostles that a person who opposes Christ will come/appear, even now there are many people who oppose Christ. That is why we know that it is the final part of *this age* (OR, *before Jesus returns*) [MTY].¹⁹ The *people who oppose Christ* refused to remain in our congregations, but they never really <belonged with us/were fellow believers>. If they had <belonged with us/been fellow believers>, they would have remained with us. But because *they left, everyone* can clearly know that none of them <belongs with us/is a fellow believer>.²⁰ But as for you, you have been given the power of *God's Spirit, which comes from Christ* (OR, *God*), the Holy One. As a result, you all know *how to <distinguish false teaching from/recognize what is false teaching and what is> the true message*.²¹ I am writing *this letter* to you, not because you do not know *what is God's true message*, but because you do know *what it is*. You also know that no false message originates/comes from *God, who is the source of all truth*.²² The *worst liars* are the ones who deny that Jesus is <the Messiah/the one whom God chose to rescue us>. They are *the ones that we told you about*, the ones who oppose Christ. They refuse to acknowledge/admit that *God is the Father* and that *Jesus is his Son* (OR, *the one who is also God*).²³ Those who refuse to acknowledge/admit that *Jesus is God's Son* do not have a relationship with the Father. But those who acknowledge/admit that *Jesus is God's Son not only have a relationship with God's Son, but they have a relationship with the Father also*.²⁴ So, as for you, you must continue to conduct your lives according to *the true message* that you heard when you began [MTY] *to believe in Christ*. If you continue to *do that*, you will continue to have a close relationship with both *God's Son and the Father*.²⁵ And what God told us is that *he will cause us to live forever!*

1 John 2:26-27

THEME: *Continue to conduct your lives according to what you were originally taught by God's Spirit.*

²⁶ I have written this to you to <warn you about/tell you to beware of> those *who want to deceive you concerning the truth about Christ*.²⁷ As for you, *God's Spirit, whom you received from Christ, remains in you*. So you do not need anyone to teach you *anything else that they claim/say is the truth*. *God's Spirit is teaching you all of God's truth that you need to*

know. God's Spirit is truthful and never says anything that is false. So continue to conduct your lives in the way that *he has* taught you.

1 John 2:28-29

THEME: *Continue to live united to Christ, so that you will be confident that he will accept you when he returns.*

²⁸ Now, *while some people are trying to persuade you to accept their false teaching, I urge* you who are very dear to me to continue to *have a close relationship with* Christ. *We need to do that* in order that we may be confident *that he will accept us* when he comes back again. If we do that, we will not be ashamed *when we stand before him* when he comes. ²⁹ Since you know that *Christ* always does what is right, you know that all those who continue doing what is right are the ones who have become children of God.

1 John 3:1-10

THEME: *Do not allow anyone to seduce you to sin, because you are God's children, and his children maintain themselves free from evil behavior by not continuing to sin as the devil's children do.*

3 ¹ *Think about* how much our Father loves us! He allows us to *<say that we are/be called>* his children! *And it is indeed true that we are his children. But people in the world* [MTY] *who are unbelievers* have not understood *who God is*. So they do not understand *who we are*, that we are *God's children*. ² Dear friends, even though *<at present/now>* we are God's children, *he* has not yet *<made clear/revealed>* to us what we will be like *in the future*. However, we know that when *Christ* comes back again, we will be like him, because we will see what he is *really* like. ³ So, all those who confidently expect to see *<Christ as he actually is/what Christ is like>* when he returns must keep themselves pure in every way, just like Christ, who is pure in every way. ⁴ But everyone who continues sinning is refusing to obey *God's laws*, because that is what sin is, refusing to obey *God's laws*. ⁵ You know that Christ came in order to completely remove *the guilt* of our sins. You know also that he never sinned. ⁶ Those who continue *doing what* Christ wants them to, do not continue sinning repeatedly. But those who repeatedly sin have not understood *who Christ is*, nor have they had a close relationship with him. ⁷ *So I urge you* who are very dear to me, do not let anyone deceive you *by telling you that it is all right to sin*. If you continue doing what is right, you are righteous, just like Christ is righteous. ⁸ *But* if anyone continues sinning, he is like the devil, because the devil has always been sinning since *the world* [MTY] began. *And* the reason why God's Son became a human being was to destroy what the devil has done. ⁹ People do not continue sinning repeatedly if they have become children of God. Instead, *they* continue to *conduct their lives according to the good life and character/nature that God produced in them* [MET]. They cannot continually sin because God has caused them to become his children. ¹⁰ Those who are God's children are clearly different from those who are *<the devil's/Satan's>* children. *The way that we can know who are Satan's children is this:* Those who do not do what is right are not God's children. *Specifically*, those who do not love their fellow believers are not *God's children* *Instead, they are Satan's children*.

1 John 3:11-18

THEME: *Because we have been changed from being spiritually dead people to being spiritually alive people, we should love each other genuinely by helping our fellow believers who are in need.*

¹¹ The message that you heard when you first [MTY] *believed in Christ* is that we should love each other. ¹² *We should not hate others* as did *Adam's son, Cain*, who belonged to *Satan*, the evil one. *Because Cain hated his younger brother*, he murdered him. *<I will tell you about why he murdered his brother./Do you know why he murdered his brother [RHQ]?>* It was because Cain habitually conducted his life in an evil way, and *he hated his younger brother* because his *younger brother conducted his life* righteously. ¹³ You should not be amazed/surprised, my fellow believers, when *unbelievers* [MTY] hate you. ¹⁴ We know that we have been changed from *being spiritually* dead [MET] to *being spiritually* alive. We know this because we love our fellow believers. *Those who* do not love *their fellow believers* are still *spiritually* [MET] dead. ¹⁵ Those who hate *any of* their fellow believers, *God considers* [MET] them to be murderers. And you know that no murderer has eternal life. ¹⁶ The way that we now know *how to truly* love *our fellow believers* is *by remembering* that Christ *<voluntarily died/gave his life>* for us. So, *when any of* our fellow believers *need something*, *we should be willing to help them. We should even be willing to die* for them. ¹⁷ *Many of us* have the things that are necessary for us to live in this world. If we become aware that any of our fellow believers do not have what they need and *if we* refuse to *<provide for them/give to them what they need>*, it is clear that we do not love God as *we claim/say that we do*. ¹⁸ *I say* to you whom I love dearly, let us not merely say [MTY] that *we love our fellow believers!* Let us genuinely/really love them by doing things to *help them!*

1 John 3:19-24

THEME: *We must believe in God's Son and love each other in order to be confident that we have a close relationship with God and that we will receive what we ask from him.*

¹⁹ By means of *truly loving our fellow believers*, we can be sure that we are *conducting our lives according to* the true message. *As a result*, we will not feel guilty/ashamed *when we talk* [MTY] to God. ²⁰ *We can pray confidently*, because *although* we might feel guilty/ashamed *about our sins*, God is *<greater/more worthy to be trusted>* than what we feel. He knows everything *about us*. ²¹ Dear friends, when we do not feel guilty *because of our sins*, we can pray to God confidently.

²²And, when we confidently pray to him and request *something from him*, we receive it because we do what he commands *us to do*, and because we do what pleases him. ²³*I will tell you* what he commands *us to do*: *We must* believe that Jesus Christ is <his Son/the one who is also God>. *We must* also love each other, just like he commanded *us to do*. ²⁴Those who do what God commands are ones who have a close relationship with God, and God has a close relationship with them. *I will tell you how* we can be sure that God has a close relationship with us: It is because *we have* his Spirit, whom he gave to us, that we can be sure that God has a close relationship with us.

1 John 4:1-6

THEME: *Continue to test the teachings you hear to know whether or not they are from God. You should test those who teach them by whether or not they acknowledge that Jesus Christ came in human form and also by what kind of people listen to that kind of teaching.*

4 ¹Dear friends, many people *who have a false message* are teaching it to people [MTY]. So do not trust every *message that someone claims/says that God's Spirit* [MTY] *gave to him*. Instead, <test/think carefully about> the teachings that *you hear* in order to know whether they are from God or not. ²*I will tell you* how to recognize *teachings that come from* the Spirit of God: Those who affirm/say that Jesus Christ came *from God* to become a human *like us* are *teaching a message* that is from God. ³But those who do not affirm/say *that about* Jesus are not *teaching a message* from God. *They are teachers who oppose Christ*. You have heard that people like that are coming *to be among us*. Even now they are already here!

⁴As for you who are very dear to me, you belong to God, and you have refused *the false messages* that those people *teach*, because *God*, who enables you *to do what he wants*, is <greater/more powerful> than <Satan/the devil>, who enables <godless people/people who conduct their lives in a way that displeases God> [MTY]. ⁵As for *those who are teaching what is false*, they are <godless people/people whose lives are displeasing to God> [MTY]. Because of that, they teach what <godless people/people whose lives are displeasing to God> [MTY] want to hear. That is why the <godless people/people whose lives displease God> [MTY] listen to them. ⁶As for *us(exc)*, *because we belong to God*, whoever <knows/has a close relationship with> God listens to us. *But* those who do not belong to God do not listen to us. That is how we can know whether *the things that people are teaching* [MTY] are true or whether they are false, and deceiving people.

1 John 4:7-11

THEME: *We must love each other. God shows us what real love is.*

⁷Dear friends, we must love each other, because *God enables us* to love *each other*, and because those who love *their fellow believers* have become God's children and <know/have a close relationship with> him. ⁸God's *nature* is to love *all people*. So those who do not love *their fellow believers* do not <know/have a relationship with> God. ⁹*I will tell you* how God has shown us *that he loves us*: He sent <his only Son/the only one who was also God> *to live* on the earth to enable us to live *eternally* as a result of *our trusting in what he accomplished for us by dying for us*. ¹⁰*And God* has shown us *what it means to love another person*: *It does not mean* that we loved God, but *it means* that God loved us and sent <his Son/the one who was also God> to sacrifice *his life* in order that *our sins might be forgiven* {*he might forgive* our sins}. ¹¹Dear friends, since God loves us like that, we certainly ought to love each other!

1 John 4:12-21

THEME: *In order to be assured that we are conducting our lives according to God's character, we must love God and our fellow believers, because God loved us first.*

¹²No one has ever seen God. *Nevertheless*, if we love each other, *it is evident that* God lives within us and that we love others just like he *intends/wants us to do*. ¹³*I will tell you* how we can be sure that we have a close relationship with God and that God is within us: He has put his Spirit within us. ¹⁴*We apostles* have seen <God's Son/the one who is also God>, and *we tell people* that the Father sent him to save *the people in the world* [MTY] *from being punished for their sins*. ¹⁵So those who affirm/say that Jesus is the <Son of/one who is also> God, God is within them, and they have a close relationship with God. ¹⁶*We* have experienced how God loves us and we believe that he loves us. *As a result, we love others*. Because God's *nature* is to love people, those who continue to love *others* have a close relationship with God, and God has a close relationship with them. ¹⁷*We should* love others completely. And if we do that, when the time comes for *him to judge us*, we will be confident *that he will not condemn us* (OR, *that we have a close relationship with him*). *We will be confident of that* because of our *conducting our lives* in this world as Christ did. ¹⁸*We* will not be afraid of God if we *truly love him*, because those who love God completely cannot possibly be afraid of *him*. *We would be afraid only if we thought that he would* punish us. So those who are afraid of God *certainly* are not loving God completely. ¹⁹*We love God and our fellow believers* because God loved us first. ²⁰So those who say "I love God" but hate a fellow believer are lying. Those who do not love one of their fellow believers, whom they have seen, certainly cannot be loving God, whom they have not seen. ²¹Keep in mind that this is what God has commanded us: If we love him, we must also love our fellow believers.

1 John 5:1-5

THEME: *Those who believe that Jesus is God's Chosen One are people who have been caused to live spiritually, and they love their fellow believers. They obey God's commands and overcome the evils of human society.*

5 ¹ All those who believe that Jesus is the <Messiah/person God sent to rescue us> are ones who *have truly* become children of God. And everyone who loves a man who is someone's father will be expected to love that man's children as well. Similarly, those who love God, who has caused them to become his children [MET], should love their fellow believers, whom God has also caused to become his children. ² The way we can be sure that we truly love God's children is this: We are loving them when we love God and do what he commands us to do. ³ I say this because our obeying what God commands us to do is the same as loving him. And it is not burdensome/difficult for us to do what God commands us to do. ⁴ All of us whom God has caused to become his children have been able to successfully resist <doing what/conducting our lives like> the people [MTY] who oppose God do. It is only by our trusting in Christ that we are able to <resist doing what/conducting our lives like> people in the world who are opposed to God [MTY] do. ⁵ <I will tell you who are the ones who are able to resist doing what the people who are opposed to God do./Do you know who are the ones who are able to resist conducting their lives like the people who are opposed to God [MTY] do? [RHQ]> It is those who believe that Jesus is <God's Son/the man who is also God>.

1 John 5:6-12

THEME: *Jesus came from God to earth. Those who believe in and live united to him have eternal life.*

⁶ Think about Jesus Christ. He is the one who came to earth from God. God showed that he had truly sent Jesus when Jesus was baptized in water [MTY] and when Jesus' blood flowed from his body when he died. God showed this not only when Jesus was baptized [MTY], but also when Jesus' blood flowed from his body when he died. And God's Spirit declares truthfully that Jesus Christ came from God. The Spirit always speaks what is true. ⁷ There are three things by which we know that Christ came from God. ⁸ Those three things are: What God's Spirit tells us, what God said when Jesus was baptized [MTY] in/with water, and Jesus' blood that flowed from his body when he died on the cross. These three things all tell us the same thing, that Jesus came from God. ⁹ We usually believe what other people say. But what God says is more reliable/trustworthy than what people say. So we must believe what God has said is true about <his Son/the one who is also God>. ¹⁰ Those who trust in the Son of God know within their <inner beings/hearts> that what God says about his Son is true. But those who refuse to believe that what God says is true are saying that God is a liar, because they refuse to believe what God has said about <his Son/the one who is also God>. ¹¹ This is what God says to us: "I have given you eternal life!" We will live forever if we have a close relationship with his Son. ¹² Those who have a close relationship with God's Son (OR, who have accepted what God's Son has done for them) have already begun to live forever. But those who do not have a relationship with <God's Son/the one who is also God> (OR, who have not accepted what God's Son has done for them) have not begun to live forever.

1 John 5:13-21

THEME: *We have a close relationship with God because we are united to his Son. Because of that relationship, we have eternal life.*

¹³ I have written this letter to you who believe that Jesus is [MTY] <God's Son/the one who is also God> in order that you may know that you have eternal life. ¹⁴ Because we have a close relationship with him, we are very confident that he hears us when we ask him to do anything that is in accordance with <his will/what he desires>. ¹⁵ And since we know that he hears whenever we ask him for something, we also know that it is as though he has already done what we requested him to do.

¹⁶ Those who see one of their fellow believers sinning in a way that does not result in eternal separation from God should ask God to help that fellow believer; and as a result God will help that fellow believer and enable him or her to live eternally. But some people sin in a manner that causes them to be separated from God eternally. I am not saying that you should ask God to help people who sin like that. ¹⁷ Everyone who does what is wrong is sinning, but there are some sins that do not cause a person to be separated from God eternally. ¹⁸ We know that if a person has new life from God [MET], that person does not continue sinning. Instead, the <Son of/one who is also> God protects him so that Satan, the evil one, does not harm him spiritually. ¹⁹ We know that we belong to God, and we know that the evil one controls all the evil people in [MTY] the world. ²⁰ We also know that <God's Son/the one who is also God> has come to us, and we know that he has enabled us to know God, the one who is really/truly God. So now we have a close relationship with God because we belong to Jesus Christ, the one who is the <Son of/man who is also> God. Jesus Christ is truly God, and he is the one who enables us to have eternal life.

²¹ I say to you who are very dear to me, guard/keep yourselves from worshipping gods that have no real power!

The Apostle John wrote another letter to his fellow believers. We call this letter **2 John**

2 John 1-3

THEME: *I, the Elder, write to the congregation and to all the members. I love you and know that God the Father and his Son will bless us.*

¹ You all know me as the chief Elder. I am writing this letter to all of you [MET] in your congregation. God has chosen you, and I love you truly! Not only do I myself love you, but all those who know *and accept the true message that Jesus taught* also love you! ² All of us *believe God's true message*. It is in our *<inner beings/hearts>* and we will continue *to believe it forever!* ³ God the Father and Jesus Christ, who is *<his Son/the man who is also God>*, will continue *to act kindly and mercifully toward us because they love us. They will enable us to have inner peace, because we believe their true message.*

2 John 4

THEME: *I am happy that some of your members are living just like God commanded us to live.*

⁴ I am very happy because I learned about some of you [SYN] who are conducting your lives in a manner that is *<consistent/in accordance>* with God's true message. You are doing that just like our Father God commanded us *to do*.

2 John 5-6

THEME: *Continue to love each other just like God commanded us to love when we first began to believe his true message.*

⁵ And now, dear congregation [MET], *there is something that I am requesting you to do*. I am writing this not to command that you do something new, but *that you continue to do what God commanded when we first began [MTY] to believe his true message. What he commanded is that we love each other.* ⁶ And we *really/truly* are loving God when we are conducting our lives in accordance with whatever he commands us *to do*. What he commands us to do is to continue *to love one another*. That is exactly what you heard when you first began [MTY] *to believe God's true message.*

2 John 7-11

THEME: *Be on your guard against teachers of false doctrine, so that you will receive your complete reward of being with God eternally. Do not welcome or encourage any of these false teachers in any way.*

⁷ Many people who deceive *others have left your congregation and* have now gone out among other people who are *in your area* [MTY]. They are the ones who *<do not acknowledge/refuse to say>* that Jesus Christ became human. They are the very ones who deceive *people* and oppose *what we teach about Christ*. ⁸ So be sure that *you do not let those teachers deceive you!* If you let them deceive you, you will lose *the reward* which we, *together with you*, have been working for, and you will not receive the complete reward *of being eternally united to God!* ⁹ Those who change what Christ taught and do not continue *to believe* what he taught do not have a *relationship with God*. But those who continue to believe *what Christ taught* have a *close relationship with both God, our Father, and with <his Son/the one who is also God>*. ¹⁰ So when anyone comes to you who teaches something different from *what Christ taught*, do not welcome him into your homes! Do not *encourage him by <wishing him well/greeting him as a fellow believer> in any way!* ¹¹ *I say that* because if you treat people like that as you would treat a fellow believer, *God will punish you* along with them for the evil that they do.

2 John 12-13

THEME: *Instead of writing much more to you, I expect to come and talk directly with you. The members of your sister congregation greet you.*

¹² *Even though* I have much *more that I want to tell you*, I have decided not *to say it* in a letter [MTY]. Instead, I expect to be with you *soon* and talk directly with you. Then we can be completely joyful *together*. ¹³ Your fellow believers here [MET], ones whom God has also chosen, *<send their greetings to you/say that they are thinking affectionately about you>*.

The Apostle John wrote a letter to a fellow believer. We call this letter **3 John**

3 John 1-4

THEME: I, the Elder, write to you, Gaius, whom I truly love. I ask God that you will do well in all respects just like your soul does well. I am happy because of the way you conduct your lives.

¹ You (sg) know me as the chief Elder. I am writing this letter to you, my dear friend Gaius, whom I truly love. ² Dear friend, I ask God that things may go well for you in every way, specifically, that you will be physically healthy just like you are spiritually healthy [MTY]. ³ I am very happy because some fellow believers have come here and told me that you conduct your life in accordance with the true message. You are *conducting your life* in a manner that is consistent with God's true message. ⁴ I am very happy when I hear that <people whom I helped to believe in Christ/my spiritual children> are conducting their lives like you are!

3 John 5-6

THEME: Continue receiving the visiting fellow believers, as you have been doing.

⁵ Dear friend, you are *servicing Jesus* loyally/faithfully whenever you do things to help fellow believers, even those whom you do not know, who are traveling around doing God's work. ⁶ Some of them have reported before the congregation here how you have showed that you love them. You should continue to help such people in their travels in a way that is pleasing to God.

3 John 7-8

THEME: Especially provide for them financially.

⁷ When those fellow believers went out to tell people about Jesus [MTY], the people who do not believe in Christ did not give them anything to help them. ⁸ So we who believe in Christ ought to give food and money to such people to help them as they teach others God's true message.

3 John 9-10

THEME: Because Diotrephes does not recognize my authority, I will publicly expose what he does in opposing us.

⁹ I wrote a letter to the congregation telling them to help those fellow believers. However, Diotrephes does not <acknowledge my authority/pay any attention to what I wrote>, because he <desires to be in charge/wants to be the leader> of the congregation. ¹⁰ So, when I arrive there I will publicly tell what he does: He tells others evil nonsense about us in order to harm us by what he says, and he is not content with only doing that. He himself refuses to receive the fellow believers who are traveling around doing God's work, and he also stops those who want to receive them by expelling them from the congregation.

3 John 11

THEME: Do not imitate a bad example; imitate good ones.

¹¹ Dear friend, do not imitate a bad example like that. Instead, keep imitating good examples. Remember that people who do good deeds <truly belong to God/are spiritual children of God>, but those who do what is evil do not <know/have fellowship with> God.

3 John 12

THEME: You will do well to receive Demetrius, who is highly recommended.

¹² All the believers who know Demetrius say that he is a good person. The fact that he conducts his life in a way that is <consistent/in accordance> with God's true message shows that he is a good person, and we also say the same thing about him. You know that what we say about him is true. So it will be good if you welcome him and help him. He is the one who will be bringing this letter to you.

3 John 13-15

THEME: *Instead of writing more, I expect to visit you soon, and we will speak directly with one another. Our mutual friends here send their greetings to all of you.*

¹³When I began to write this letter, I had much more *that I intended* to tell you. But now I do not want to say *it* in a letter [MTY]. ¹⁴Instead, I expect to *come and* see you soon. Then we will talk directly with one another. ¹⁵*I pray that God will enable you to experience inner* peace. Our friends *here* <send you their greetings/say that they are thinking affectionately about you> [MTY]. Tell our friends *there* that we <send our greetings to/are thinking fondly about> them.

Jude, a brother of Jesus, wrote a letter to his fellow believers. We call this letter Jude

Jude 1-2

THEME: *I, Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, write to you who are chosen, loved, and protected by God.*

¹ I am Jude. I serve Jesus Christ like a voluntary slave [MET]. I am a younger brother of James, the leader of all the congregations. I am writing to you whom God has chosen to belong to him. You are loved by God our Father and protected by Jesus Christ (OR, whom God has protected to present to Jesus Christ). ² I pray that you will continue to experience very much God acting mercifully toward you, causing you to have inner peace, and loving you.

Jude 3-4

THEME: *Proclaim the truth that we believe and strongly defend it against those who oppose it.*

³ You whom I love, I <was very eager/very much wanted> to write to you about that which we all <share/have in common>, which is how <God/Jesus Christ> has saved us. But now I realize that it is necessary for me to write to you in order to exhort you to defend the truth about Christ that we believe. Jesus and his apostles gave that truth once for all to us who belong to God, and we must not let it be changed {anyone revise/change it}. ⁴ Some people falsely teach that because God kindly does for us what we do not deserve, it <does not matter/is all right> if we continue to sin. Those people show by the way that they conduct their lives that they do not want to admit/accept that Jesus Christ is our only Master and Lord. It was written long ago {Someone long ago wrote} that God would condemn <such ungodly people/people like that whose lives are displeasing to him>. But some of those people have entered [MET] like crawling snakes into your congregations and oppose the truth about Christ, so you must resist/oppose them.

Jude 5-8

THEME: *How God destroyed three groups illustrates that he will destroy these ungodly people in your midst.*

⁵ Although you previously knew all these things, there are certain things about which I desire to remind you. Do not forget that although the Lord rescued his people from Egypt country, he later destroyed most of those same people, ones who did not believe in him. ⁶ And there were many angels to whom God assigned/gave positions of authority in heaven. But they did not continue to rule with authority in those positions. Instead, they abandoned the place that God gave them to live in heaven. So God has put those angels in chains forever in the darkness in hell. They will stay there until the great day when God will judge and punish them. ⁷ Similarly, the people who lived [MTY] in Sodom and Gomorrah cities and the nearby cities committed sexual immorality. They sought all kinds of sexual relations that differ from what God permits. So God destroyed their cities. What happened to those people and those angels shows that God will punish people, such as the ones who teach false doctrine, in the eternal fire of hell. ⁸ Similarly, these ungodly people in your midst also defile their own bodies by living immorally, because they claim/say that God revealed in visions that they should act that way. They refuse to allow anyone to have authority over them, and they <revile/speak evil about> God's glorious/wonderful angels.

Jude 9-10

THEME: *Those teachers of false doctrine revile the spiritual beings that they do not understand. But God will destroy them.*

⁹ When <the devil/Satan> argued with the chief angel, Michael, about who would take away the body of the prophet Moses to bury it, Michael did not do as these teachers of false doctrine do. Even though Michael has much more authority than they do, he did not disrespectfully <revile/say evil things to> Satan and accuse/condemn him. Instead, he only said, "I desire that the Lord God will rebuke you!" ¹⁰ But the ones in your midst who teach false doctrine <revile/speak evil against> the spiritual beings that they do not understand. They also do the evil things that they desire, things that they know about <naturally/without needing to think>, things that they just do without considering the consequences/results, like animals. So they destroy themselves. But they will also be punished by God {God will also punish them}.

Jude 11-13

THEME: *Because the teachers of false doctrine do wicked things, God will condemn them to hell. They are dangerous, useless, spiritually dead, restless, shameless, and unreliable.*

¹¹ God will do terrible things to those who teach false doctrine! They conduct their lives wickedly like Cain, who murdered his brother because he was <jealous/angry because God accepted his brother's sacrifice and did not accept his>. They <devote themselves to [MET] doing wrong things like Balaam, who tried to induce God's people to sin in order to get the money that was offered to him. They will perish like Korah, who rebelled against the authority that God gave to Moses.

¹² Those teachers of false doctrine are as dangerous to you as [MET] <hidden rocks on a reef/rocks underneath the

surface of the ocean> *are to a boat*. When you gather together to *eat the meals that help you* believers to love each other more and have a closer relationship with each other, they *join you and* carouse shamelessly, caring *only* for themselves and not for others. Because they do not do anything to help others [MET], they are as useless as clouds that are blown along by the wind {that the wind blows along} but that do not produce/give any rain. They are as disappointing as [MET] trees that do not produce fruit in the autumn as we expect them to. They are not only spiritually [MET] dead themselves, but they are not able to cause others to be alive spiritually, just like [MET] trees that have been {that someone has} uprooted and as a result are unable to produce any fruit.¹³ They are restless [MET], like the pounding waves of the ocean. Just like waves produce foul-smelling foam on the shore, those teachers of false doctrine do shameful [MET] deeds. We cannot depend/rely on them to show us how to conduct our lives [MET], just like we cannot depend/rely on <meteors/falling stars> to show us the way when we travel. God has reserved intense darkness for them forever in hell.

Jude 14-16

THEME: *Enoch prophesied that the Lord will condemn people like the wicked teachers of false doctrine. They grumble, are discontent, and are arrogant flatterers.*

¹⁴ Enoch, the sixth person in the line of people who descended from Adam, prophesied this about those teachers of false doctrine: "Listen carefully to this: The Lord will certainly come with a countless number of his holy angels in order¹⁵ to judge everyone, and to punish all wicked and <ungodly people/people whose lives are displeasing to God> for all the <ungodly things/things that displease God> that they did in <an ungodly way/a way that displeases God>, and for all the harsh things that ungodly sinful people have spoken against him."¹⁶ Those teachers of false doctrine grumble about the things that God does. They complain about what happens to them. They do the sinful things that their bodies desire. They talk boastfully. They <flatter/say nice things to> people, only in order to get those people to give them the things that they want.

Jude 17-19

THEME: *The apostles predicted that wicked people like the teachers of false doctrine would come. They divide believers, are self-directed, and devoid of God's Spirit.*

¹⁷ But you people whom I love need to remember the things that were predicted by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ {that the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ said would happen}.¹⁸ They told you, "In the final period of time in which we are now living there will be people who will laugh at the truths that God has revealed. They will do the <ungodly things/things that are displeasing to God> that their bodies desire."¹⁹ That describes the teachers of false doctrine well, because they are the ones who cause believers to divide among themselves. They do what their own minds tell them to do. The Spirit of God does not live within them.

Jude 20-21

THEME: *Believe the truth more firmly, pray by the power of the Spirit, and keep expecting God's mercy.*

²⁰ But you people whom I love, <establish yourselves/continue to trust> firmly in the very sacred truths that you believe. Pray by letting the Holy Spirit enable/empower you.²¹ Keep conducting your lives in a way that is appropriate for those whom God loves. Keep constantly expecting that our Lord Jesus Christ will act mercifully toward you. Keep expecting that until the time when we begin living eternally with him.

Jude 22-23

THEME: *Mercifully help those who are not certain what to believe, save those who are in danger of being influenced by the teachers of false doctrine, and pity those completely convinced by them.*

²² Mercifully help those who are not certain what teaching they should believe.²³ Rescue others from the influence of those who teach what is false [MET], as you would rescue things by snatching them from a fire. Pity those whom the teachers of false doctrine have completely convinced, but beware that you are not influenced by them {that they do not influence you}. Detest doing or even thinking about the sins that those people commit, just like you would detest [MET] touching not only filthy things but the clothes that were stained by those things {that those things stained}.

Jude 24-25

THEME: *God, who is able to keep you from being condemned for your sin and to present you guiltless before him, was great and ruled before time began, is still like that, and will remain so forever.*

²⁴ God is able to keep you from ceasing to trust in him (OR, from sinning), and he is able to present you before his glorious presence. In his presence, there will be nothing for which you will be condemned {he can condemn you}, and you will be rejoicing greatly.²⁵ He is the only true God. He has saved us as a result of what Jesus Christ our Lord did for us. God was glorious and great and mighty and he ruled with great authority before time began. He is still like that, and he will remain like that forever! <Amen!/That is true!>

Jesus showed the Apostle John some visions. We call John's account Revelation

Revelation 1:1-3

THEME: John urged people to read this book, listen carefully to it, and obey it.

1 ¹ *This book tells the message that God revealed to Jesus Christ. God revealed it to him in order that he might reveal to his servants the things/events that must happen soon. Jesus communicated this message to me, his servant John, by sending his angel to me. ²As I write it, I, John, am truthfully reporting everything that I saw and heard, the message from God that Jesus Christ truthfully reported to me. ³God is pleased with those who read this book to the congregation, and he will be pleased with those who listen carefully to it and obey what he has commanded by means of this prophetic message that I am writing. So read this message, listen carefully to it, and obey it, because these things that Jesus has revealed will happen soon.*

Revelation 1:4-8

THEME: John said that he was writing to believers in the seven congregations in Asia. He prayed that God would bless them. He said that Christ is coming to judge rebellious people and to bring in his kingdom.

⁴I, John, am writing this to you believers in the seven congregations that are located in Asia province. I pray that God the Father, God's Spirit, and Jesus Christ may act kindly toward (OR, bless) you and cause you to have inner peace. God the Father is the one who exists, who has always existed, and who will always exist. The Spirit of God, who is in front of God's throne, has all kinds of power (OR, The Spirit of God is symbolized by seven spirits who are in front of God's throne). ⁵Jesus Christ is the one who has faithfully told people about God. He is the first one <whom God has raised from the dead/who became alive again after being dead>, in order to show that he will raise us who trust him. He is the one who rules the kings of the earth. He is the one who loves us. He is the one who has cancelled the guilt for our sins. He did that by the blood which flowed from his body when he died on the cross. ⁶He is the one who has caused us to become people over whose lives God rules, and he has made us to be priests who serve his God and Father. As a result of this, we acknowledge that Jesus Christ is eternally divine and eternally powerful. <Amen!/That is true!>

⁷Listen carefully! Christ will surely come in the midst of the clouds in order that he may judge the rebellious people of earth, and everyone [SYN] will see him come. Even those who are responsible for piercing and killing him [MTY] will see him come. People from all people-groups on earth will mourn because he will punish them. <Amen!/May it be so.> ⁸The Lord God declares, "I am the one who began all things, and I am the one who will cause all things to end [MET]." He is the one who exists, who has always existed, and who will always exist. He is the Almighty One.

Revelation 1:9-20

THEME: Christ appeared to John and commissioned him to write down the vision that he was about to give him and to send it to the seven congregations in Asia.

⁹I, John, your fellow believer, am suffering as you are because of our letting Jesus rule our lives. We are steadfastly enduring trials because of our relationship with him. I was <punished by being sent/exiled> to the island that is called {that people call} Patmos because of my proclaiming God's message and telling people about Jesus. ¹⁰God's Spirit took control of me on one of the days that we believers met to worship the Lord. ¹¹At that time, I heard behind me someone speaking to me as loudly and as clearly [SIM] as a trumpet. He was saying to me, "Write on a scroll what you see, and send it to seven congregations. Send it to the congregations in Ephesus city, in Smyrna city, in Pergamum city, in Thyatira city, in Sardis city, in Philadelphia city, and in Laodicea city." ¹²In this vision I turned in order that I might see who had spoken to me [SYN]. When I turned, ¹³I saw seven golden lampstands. In the midst of the lampstands there was someone who looked like one who came from heaven. He wore a robe that reached to his feet, and he wore a gold band around his chest. ¹⁴The hair on his head was white like white wool or like snow. His eyes were shining brightly [SIM], like a flame of fire. ¹⁵His feet looked like brass that glows as it is being purified {as people purify it} in a furnace. When he spoke, his voice sounded like the sound made by a huge waterfall (OR, a great/wide river of rushing water). ¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars. A sword that had two sharp edges extended from his mouth. His face shone as bright as the sun shines at midday [MTY]. ¹⁷When I saw him, I fell down at his feet and was unable to move or speak [SIM], as though I were dead. But he put his right hand on me and said to me, "Stop being afraid! I am the one who began all things and the one who causes all things to end." ¹⁸I am the one who always lives. Although I died, I am alive and will live forever! I have the power to cause people to die, and I have authority over the place where all the dead people are. ¹⁹So write the vision that you are seeing. Write about the conditions that exist now, and the events that are about to happen afterward. ²⁰The meaning of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands that you saw is this: The seven stars in my

hand represent the leaders, who are like angels, who watch over the seven congregations, and the seven lampstands represent the seven congregations.”

Revelation 2:1-7

THEME: *Christ exhorts the congregation at Ephesus to repent and to begin again to love him and each other.*

2 ¹ He also said to me, “Write this message to the leader [MET] of the congregation in Ephesus city: ‘I am saying these things to you: I am the one who firmly holds the seven stars in my right hand. I am the one who walks among the seven golden lampstands. ² I know what you do: You labor for me intensely, and you continue to serve me steadfastly. I know that you cannot tolerate people who teach what is evil [MTY], and that you investigated people who falsely claimed that they are apostles, and you found that they were lying. ³ I know also that you continue to serve me steadfastly. Even when people <caused you to suffer/persecuted you>, you continued to serve me because you believe in me, and you have not become too tired to keep on serving me. ⁴ Nevertheless, I have this complaint against you: You no longer love each other and me as you did when you first [MTY] trusted in me. ⁵ So, I tell you to remember how you used to love me and each other, and to realize that you no longer love as you did. I tell you to turn away from your sin of not loving me and each other, and start loving each other and me again as you did at first. If you do not turn away from your sinful behavior, I will come to judge you and cause your group to cease to be a Christian congregation [MET]. ⁶ But you have the following good quality: Those Nicolaitans teach you believers that you can worship idols and that you may act immorally. However, you hate such teaching, just like I also hate it. ⁷ Everyone who wants to understand my message [MTY] must listen carefully to the message that God’s Spirit speaks to the congregations. To everyone who overcomes Satan, I will give the right to eat fruit [MTY] from the tree that gives eternal life, the tree that is in God’s garden.”

Revelation 2:8-11

THEME: *Christ exhorts the congregation at Smyrna not to fear what they will suffer, but to trust in him, even if they must die because they trust in him.*

⁸ “Write this message to the leader [MET] of the congregation in Smyrna city: ‘I am saying these things to you. I am the one who began all things and who causes all things to end. I am the one who died and became alive again. ⁹ I know that you suffer because of what unbelievers do to you, and that you lack material possessions. But I also know that you are spiritually [MET] rich. I know that people <slander/say evil things about> you. They say that they are Jews, but I do not consider that they are Jews. I consider that they belong to the assembly that Satan controls! ¹⁰ Do not be afraid of any of the things that you are about to suffer. The truth is that the devil is about to put some of you in prison, to tempt you to deny that you believe in me. For a short period of time you will suffer because of what people will do to you [MTY]. Continue to trust in me, even if they kill you because you trust in me. As a result, I will reward you with eternal life, just like [MET] people reward a victorious athlete by putting a wreath on his head. ¹¹ Everyone who wants to understand [MTY] must listen carefully to the message that God’s Spirit speaks to the congregations. After those who conquer Satan die, they will live with God. They will never suffer again, even though many others will suffer as though they died a second time.”

Revelation 2:12-17

THEME: *Christ exhorts the congregation at Pergamum to stop listening to what the Nicolaitans teach.*

¹² “Write this message to the leader [MET] of the congregation in Pergamum city: ‘I am saying these things to you. I am the one who has the sharp two-edged sword. ¹³ I know where you live: It is where Satan controls [MTY] people. I know that you firmly believe in me [MTY]. You did not deny that you believe/trust in me, not even in the time when Antipas, <my faithful witness/who faithfully told people about me>, was alive. He was killed {People killed him} in your city, a city where people habitually obey Satan. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, I have this complaint against you: You permit some of your members to teach things like Balaam taught long ago. He taught Balak to persuade the Israelite people to sin. Specifically, he taught them to eat food that had been offered to idols, and to practice sexual immorality. ¹⁵ In that way, you are also permitting some of your members to practice what the Nicolaitans teach, which is like what Balaam taught. ¹⁶ So you must stop doing this. If you do not stop doing it, I will come to you suddenly. With the words that I will speak I will fight against those who believe this false teaching [MTY], and I will <condemn them/say that they must be punished>. ¹⁷ Everyone who wants to understand [MTY] must listen carefully to the message that God’s Spirit speaks to the congregations. To everyone who conquers Satan, I will give blessings that will be like the food called manna that is in a jar that is {that someone has} hidden. I will also give them a white stone on which I will engrave a new name, a name that no one but the ones who receive it will know.”

Revelation 2:18-29

THEME: *Christ rebukes the congregation at Thyatira for tolerating a teacher who encourages sexual immorality and eating food offered to idols. He warns those who participate in these things that he will punish them unless they repent, and he exhorts the rest of the members to remain loyal to him.*

¹⁸ “Write this message to the leader [MET] of the congregation in Thyatira city: ‘I, <the Son of God/the one who is also God>, am saying these things to you: I am the one whose eyes shine [SIM] like a flame of fire, and whose feet

shine [MET] like fine brass. ¹⁹ I know that you love *me and each other*, and that you trust *in me*. I know that you serve *others* and that you steadfastly endure *a lot of difficulties/trials*. I know that you are doing these things more now than you have done *them* in the past. ²⁰ Nevertheless, I have this *complaint* against you: You tolerate that woman *among your members who is like* [MET] *that wicked queen Jezebel who lived long ago*. She says that she *<is a prophetess/proclaims messages that come directly from God>*, but by what she teaches she is deceiving my servants. She is urging them to practice sexual immorality and to eat food that they have offered to idols. ²¹ Although I gave her time to turn away from *her sexual immorality and pagan practices*, she did not want to stop *doing them*. ²² Take notice *that as a result*, I will cause her to become very ill [MTY]. I will also cause those *who act immorally as she does* [MET] to suffer greatly, if they do not stop *doing what she does*. ²³ Some *have become like* her children by accepting *what she teaches* [MET]; I will certainly get rid of them. As a result, all the congregations will recognize that I am the one who finds out what everyone thinks and desires [MTY]. I will reward each of you according to what you have done. ²⁴ But I have something good to say about the rest of *you believers* in Thyatira. *It is good* that you do not accept that *false teaching*. *It is good that you reject* what those *teachers* call their *'secret practices,' practices that Satan inspired* (OR, what those teachers *facetiously* call the secret, profound *practices that Satan inspires*). I will not burden you with any other commands *than that which you already have*. ²⁵ Just keep *believing firmly in me, and obey me* until I come. ²⁶ As for those who conquer *Satan* and who (OR, *because they*) keep on doing until they die what I command, I will give them my authority, just like I myself received it from my Father. *They will exercise that authority over the nations that rebel against God*. ²⁷ They will exercise authority over them *severely as if they were striking them* [HYP] with an iron rod. They *will destroy evil doers* just like *people* shatter clay pots [MET]. ²⁸ I will also give to *everyone who conquers Satan a share in the glory like the morning star has* [MTY, MET]. ²⁹ Everyone who wants to understand [MTY] must listen carefully to the message that *God's Spirit* speaks to the congregations.”

Revelation 3:1-6

THEME: *Christ exhorts the congregation at Sardis to wake up and repent. But the members who are worthy will live with him.*

3 ¹ “Write *this message* to the leader [MET] of the congregation in Sardis *city*: ‘I am saying these things *to you*. I am the one who can give *to people* all the power of God’s Spirit (OR, in whom is the Spirit of God who has all kinds of power; OR, *who has God’s Spirit, who is symbolized as seven spirits*), and I am the one who has the seven stars. I know everything that you have done. You (pl) appear to be alive *spiritually*, but *you are so weak spiritually it is as though* you are dead [MET]. ² *Become aware of your spiritual need as though you were awaking from sleep* [MET], and strengthen *yourself spiritually, because you are so useless that you are like someone who is about to die* [MET]. *You must do this* because I know that my God considers that nothing that you do is satisfactory. ³ So then, keep remembering *God’s message, what you accepted* when you heard it. Obey it continually, and turn away from your sinful behavior. If *you do not become aware of your spiritual need and turn away from your* [MET] *sinful behavior*, I will come to you *when you are not expecting me*, as a thief comes [SIM]. You will never know at what time I will come to *judge* you. ⁴ Nevertheless, *there* in Sardis you have a few members who *have not been doing what is wrong*. *It is as though they* have not soiled their garments [MET]. As a result, because they are worthy *to live with me*, they will live with me *and will be pure in every way* [MET], *like people who are dressed in pure white clothing*. ⁵ Everyone who conquers *Satan* I will dress in these same white garments [MET] (OR, will be *pure in every way as though they are* dressed in these white garments), and I will never erase their names from the book *that contains the names of the people who have eternal life*. Instead, as my Father and his angels are listening, I will acknowledge that they [MTY] *belong to me*. ⁶ Everyone who wants to understand [MTY] must listen carefully to the message that *God’s Spirit* speaks to the congregations.”

Revelation 3:7-13

THEME: *Christ exhorts the congregation at Philadelphia to continue to obey his word and to be faithful; he promises that some Jews will acknowledge that he loves the congregation, and he also promises that he will keep the congregation from spiritual harm during the period of testing.*

⁷ “Write *this message* to the leader [MET] of the congregation in Philadelphia *city*: ‘I am saying these things *to you*. I am God’s Holy One, the True One. *Just like King David* had authority [MTY] *to allow people to enter the ancient city of Jerusalem, so I have the authority to allow people to enter my kingdom*. I am the one who opens *doors* so that no one can close them, and who closes *doors* so that no one can open them. ⁸ I know everything you have done. Be aware that I have opened before you a door that no one can close. *I know that although* you do not have *many believers* (OR, much *spiritual strength*) [MTY] *in your congregation*, you have obeyed what I say, and you have not denied *that you believe in me* [MTY]. ⁹ *I am aware that* some of your people meet together with those who *follow/worship Satan*. They claim to be Jews, but I know that they are not true Jews. They are lying. I will cause them to come to you and to bow down *humbly* at your feet and to acknowledge that I love you.

¹⁰ Because you have paid attention to the message to endure patiently *when you suffered*, I will keep you *safe from those who will try to harm you spiritually* during the period/time that is about to come. At that time *God will cause rebellious people* on the earth to suffer, in order that I can determine *whether they will turn away from their sins or not*. ¹¹ I am coming soon. So continue *<to hold fast to/to believe firmly>* the *message* that you have received, in order that no one may cause you to lose the reward *that God has reserved for you*. ¹² I will make everyone who conquers *Satan secure*. They will be *firm like* [MET] the pillars in the temple of my God, and they will remain there forever. I will mark them with the name of my

God, *showing that they belong to him. I will also mark them with the name of the city of my God, showing that they will live there. That city is the New Jerusalem, the city that will descend out of heaven from my God. I will also mark them with my new name, showing that they belong to me.* ¹³ Everyone who wants to understand [MTY] must listen carefully to the message that God's Spirit speaks to the congregations."

Revelation 3:14-22

THEME: *Christ exhorts the congregation at Laodicea to repent of their neglect of fellowship with him and of their failure to accept his provision for their spiritual needs. He waits to restore fellowship with any member of the congregation who will respond to his call.*

¹⁴ "Write *this message* to the leader [MET] of the congregation in Laodicea city: 'I am saying these things to you. I am the one who *<guarantees all of God's promises/ confirms that God will do all that he has promised>* [MET]. I am the one who testifies *about God* reliably and accurately. I am the one by whom God created *all things*. ¹⁵ I know everything that you have done: You *neither deny that you trust in me nor love/obey me zealously/wholeheartedly. You are like water that is* neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot! ¹⁶ Because you are neither enthusiastic about me nor concerned about your lack of spiritual growth [MET], I am about to *reject* you [MET], *as if* I were spitting *lukewarm water* out of my mouth. ¹⁷ You are saying, 'Because we have all that we need spiritually, we are *like rich people* who have acquired a lot of wealth. We lack nothing!' But you do not realize that you are *lacking in so many ways spiritually that you are like* [MET] people who are very wretched and pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. ¹⁸ I advise you *to obtain from me all that you need spiritually, as though you were* buying from me gold that has been refined by fire {that fire has refined}, in order that you may be *truly rich* [MET] *spiritually. Let me make you righteous, as though you were* [MET] buying from me white garments in order that you might wear clothes instead of being naked and ashamed. *Let me help you to perceive spiritual things, as though* [MET] you were buying from me eye salve in order to anoint your eyes in order that you might see.^a ¹⁹ Since I rebuke and correct all those whom I affectionately love, earnestly turn away from your sinful behavior. ²⁰ Be aware that *I call each one of you to respond to me* as though [MET] I was standing *waiting at your door and knocking*. I will come to all those who hear my voice and respond to me, and I *will fellowship* with them *as friends do when they eat together* [MET]. ²¹ I will permit everyone who conquers *Satan* to sit *and rule* with me on my throne, just like I conquered *Satan* and now sit *and rule* with my Father on his throne. ²² Everyone who wants to understand [MTY] must listen carefully to the message that God's Spirit speaks to the congregations."

Revelation 4:1-11

THEME: *A throne was in heaven with one sitting on it. He was the center of every creature and object in heaven. The elders and the living creatures worshipped him as God, the mighty Creator.*

4 ¹ After these things I, *John*, saw *in the vision that* there was a door open in heaven. The one whose voice was like [SIM] a *loud trumpet*, the one *who had spoken to me* previously, said *to me*, "Come up here! I will show you events that must happen later." ² Immediately I experienced that God's Spirit was *especially controlling me*. There was a throne there in heaven, and on the throne someone was sitting *and ruling*. ³ *<His appearance/He>* shone like [SIM] a *brilliant crystalline jasper jewel* and like a *brilliant red carnelian jewel*. Around the throne was a rainbow that *shone like a brilliant green emerald jewel*. ⁴ Around the throne there were twenty-four other thrones. On these thrones twenty-four elders were *sitting*. They were wearing *pure* white garments and had golden crowns on their heads. ⁵ From the throne there came lightning and rumblings and thundering. Seven torches of fire were burning in front of the throne. Those *represent* the Spirit of God, who has all kinds of *power* (OR, who is *also* symbolized as seven spirits). ⁶ In front of the throne *there was what looked* like an ocean *made of glass*. It was *clear*, like crystal. On each of the four sides of the throne there was a living *creature*. Each one was covered with eyes in front and behind. ⁷⁻⁸ The first living *creature* was like a lion. The second living *creature* was like an ox. The third living *creature* had a face like a man's face. The fourth living creature was like an eagle that was flying. Each of the four living *creatures* had six wings. They were covered with eyes, all around *their bodies* and under *their wings*. Day and night they continually [LIT] sing:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty One.
He is the one who has always existed,
who exists now, and who will always exist.

⁹⁻¹⁰ The living *creatures* *praise*, honor [DOU], and thank the one who sits on the throne, the one who lives forever. Whenever they do that, the twenty-four elders *<prostrate themselves/kneel down>* before the one who sits on the throne, and they worship him, the one who lives forever. They lay their crowns in front of the throne and sing:

¹¹ Our(exc) Lord and God,
you are worthy *that all beings* praise you,
you are worthy *that all beings* honor you, and
you are worthy *that all beings* acknowledge
that you are the powerful one,

^a Commentaries say that John was probably referring to things that Laodicea was known for. If it is desired to make this clear, one could translate for this verse "Although you have many rich people there,...Although many clothes are made and sold there, ...Although there is a famous eye doctor there..."

because you *alone* created all things.

Moreover, because you purposed/planned *that they should exist*, you created them, and as a *result* they exist.

Revelation 5:1-14

THEME: *When the Lamb took the scroll from the one on the throne, the whole created universe worshipped him who is the worthy Redeemer. The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures acknowledged that he alone was worthy to open the seals on the scroll.*

5¹ I saw that there was a scroll in the right hand of the one who was sitting on the throne. The scroll was written on its outside as well as on its inside, and it was sealed {Someone had written on the outside as well as on the inside of the scroll and sealed it} with seven seals. ²I saw a strong angel who was announcing in a loud voice, “◀The person who is worthy to break the seals of the scroll and then to open it should come to do it!/Who is worthy to break the seals of the scroll and then to open it?▶” [RHQ] ³But no created being in heaven nor any created being on the earth nor any created being under the earth was able to open the scroll and see what was written on it. ⁴I cried loudly because there was no one worthy to do that. ⁵But one of the elders said to me, “Do not cry any longer! Look, the one who is called the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Messiah who is the descendant of King David, has overcome Satan! As a result, he is worthy to break the seven seals on the scroll and open it!” ⁶Then I saw Jesus, the one who is like a [MET] sacrificial lamb, standing there. He stood near the throne, in the midst of the four living creatures and the elders. It appeared that he had been killed {that people had killed him}, but he was alive again. He had seven horns, and he had seven eyes that symbolize the Spirit of God who has all kinds of power (OR, who is also symbolized as seven spirits). *He sends God’s Spirit out into all the earth.* ⁷He came and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who sits on the throne. ⁸When he took the scroll, the four living *creatures* and the twenty-four elders ◀prostrated themselves/knelt down▶ before *Jesus, the one who is like a lamb, to worship him*. They each had a harp, and they had golden bowls full of incense that *represents* the prayers of God’s people. ⁹The living *creatures* and the elders sang a new song. They sang:

You are worthy to receive the scroll and to open its seals,
because you were killed, and because you redeemed/bought
people for God from every tribe, language [MTY], people-group,
and nation with the blood *that flowed from your body when you died*.

¹⁰You have caused them to become a people over whom our God rules,
and to become priests who serve him, and they will rule on [MTY] the earth.

¹¹As I *continued to* look, I heard the voices of many angels around the throne and around the living *creatures* and the elders. There were millions of them, a *crowd so large that no one could count them*. ¹²They were singing in a loud voice:

The *one who is like a lamb*, who was killed {whom *his enemies* killed}
and who became alive again, is worthy *that all created beings* acknowledge
that he is *infinitely* powerful, *infinitely* rich,
infinitely wise, and *infinitely* strong!
He is worthy of *being* honored and praised by *all created beings*!

¹³I also heard every creature that is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the ocean, every creature in all those places, saying (OR, singing):

We must forever praise and honor the one who sits on the throne
and the one who is like a lamb,
May they reign with complete power forever!

¹⁴The four living *creatures* said, “◀Amen!/May it be so!▶” Then the elders prostrated themselves and worshipped *God and Jesus*.

Revelation 6:1-8

THEME: *When the Lamb opened each of the first four seals of the scroll, each of the four living creatures called forth a mounted horseman who brought judgment to people on the earth.*

6¹ I saw that *Jesus, the one who is like a lamb*, opened the first of the seven seals of *the scroll*. Then I heard one of the four living *creatures* say in a voice as loud as [SIM] thunder, “Come!” ²Then I saw a white horse *come out*. The one who sat on it had a bow and arrows. *God* gave him a crown to show that he was the king. Then the one who conquers *people* went out to continue to conquer *people*. ³When the *one who is like a lamb* opened the second seal, I heard the second living *creature* say, “Come!” ⁴Then a red horse came out. The one sitting on it was allowed {*God* allowed the one sitting on it} to cause *people* to no longer *live* peacefully, but instead to be killing each other. *For this purpose* he was given {*God’s agent* gave to him} a large sword. ⁵When the *one who is like a lamb* opened the third seal, I heard the third living *creature* say, “Come!” This time, I saw a black horse *come out*. The one who sat on it had a pair of balance scales in his hand. ⁶I heard a voice that sounded like it was coming from among the four living *creatures*. It was saying ◀to the horseman/to the man who was sitting on the horse▶, “A quart of wheat will cost so much that a man must work a whole day to earn enough money to buy it, and three quarts of barley will sell for the same price. But do not cut off *the supply* of olive oil or

the wine [MTY]!”⁷ When the *one who is like a lamb* opened the fourth seal, I heard the fourth living *creature* say, “Come!”⁸ This time I saw a pale horse *come out*. The one who sat on it is named ‘*The one who causes death* [PRS],’ and *the one that is named ‘The place where dead people go’* accompanied him. God gave them authority over one quarter of the people on earth to incite them to kill each other with weapons [SYN], and also authority to kill them <by means of *their causing them to lack food/by famine*>, by means of *their causing them to become sick* from epidemics, and by means of *their causing wild animals to attack them*.

Revelation 6:9-11

THEME: *When the Lamb opened the fifth seal, the souls of dead believers appealed to God to judge those who killed them, but God told them to rest a bit longer.*

⁹When the *one who is like a lamb* opened the fifth seal, I saw under (OR, at the base of) the altar *in heaven* the souls of *God’s servants* who had been killed {whom *people had killed*} because of *their believing* God’s message, and because they told others *the message about Jesus*.¹⁰ They spoke loudly *to God* saying, “Sovereign/Almighty Lord, you are holy and true. How long *will it be* before you judge *and punish* the people on earth who murdered *us(exc)?*”¹¹ God gave to each of them a long white robe, and *he* told them to rest a little longer until *people* killed all the believers who served *the Lord* with them. They were believers whom *God wanted to die in just the same way* that these others had been killed.

Revelation 6:12-17

THEME: *When the Lamb opened the sixth seal of the scroll, the upheaval in the sky and on the earth caused all the rebellious people on earth to hide because they knew God’s judgment time had come.*

¹²I saw that when *the one who is like a lamb* opened the sixth seal, the earth shook violently. The sun became as black as cloth made <of *black wool/of pitch*>. The whole moon became *red* [SIM] like blood.¹³ The stars fell to the earth *in great numbers*, just [SIM] like immature figs fall when a fig tree is shaken by a strong wind {when a strong wind shakes a fig tree}.¹⁴ The sky split open and *rolled up on either side* just [SIM] like an *old scroll* rolls up *when it is split in two*. Every mountain and island moved out of its place.¹⁵ *As a result, all the rebellious people* of the earth, *including kings, high-ranking people, generals, the rich people, the powerful people, along with everybody else*, both slave and free, hid themselves in caves and between the mountain rocks.¹⁶ They shouted to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on *us(exc)* and hide *us(exc)* in order that the one who sits upon the throne will not be able to see *us(exc)* [MTY], and *in order that the one who is like a lamb* will not be able to punish [MTY] *us(exc)*!”¹⁷ This is the great/terrible day on which they will punish [MTY] *us(exc)*, and *when that happens*, <no one will be able to survive!/who will be able to endure?> [RHQ]”

Revelation 7:1-8

THEME: *An angel ascended from the east and commanded the four angels stationed in four directions to continue restraining the destructive winds until angels had sealed God’s servants.*

7¹After this I saw four angels. One was standing at the north, one at the east, one at the south, and one at the west. They were restraining the winds that blew from all directions [MTY] to keep them from blowing *destructively* on the earth or on the ocean or even on any tree.² I saw another angel ascend from the east. He was carrying God’s seal. *With this seal* God, who is all powerful, marks *his own people to protect them*. He called out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom *he* had given *power* to harm the earth and the ocean. He said³ *to them*, “Do not harm the earth or the ocean or the trees until *we(exc)* have marked the servants of our(*inc*) God on their foreheads.”⁴ *Then the angel and his fellow angels marked all God’s servants*. I heard the number of people who were marked {whom *the angels* marked} *because of their being God’s servants. The number was one hundred and forty-four thousand*. They were from all the tribes of Israel. *They symbolized the complete number of people whom God would protect*.⁵ *The angels* marked twelve thousand people from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand from the tribe of Reuben, twelve thousand from the tribe of Gad,⁶ twelve thousand from the tribe of Asher, twelve thousand from the tribe of Naphtali, twelve thousand from the tribe of Manasseh,⁷ twelve thousand from the tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand from the tribe of Levi, twelve thousand from the tribe of Issachar,⁸ twelve thousand from the tribe of Zebulun, twelve thousand from the tribe of Joseph, and twelve thousand from the tribe of Benjamin.

Revelation 7:9-12

THEME: *The triumphant crowd stood before the throne in heaven and acknowledged that their deliverance had come from God and the Lamb. Then the angels, the elders, the living creatures, and a huge crowd of people worshipped God in praise.*

⁹After these things I saw a huge crowd. There were so *many people* that no one would be able to count them. *They were* from every nation, every tribe, every people-group, and every language [MTY]. They were standing before the throne and before *Jesus, the one who is like a lamb*. They were wearing white robes and held palm branches *to wave* with their hands *in order to celebrate*.¹⁰ They shouted loudly, “O *our(exc)* God, you who sit on the throne, and *Jesus, you who are like a lamb, you two* have delivered *us(exc)* from *Satan’s power!*”¹¹ All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living *creatures*. They all bowed down before the throne with their faces *to the ground* and

worshipped God. ¹²They said, “May it be so! *We(exc)* praise, thank, and honor *you, our(exc)* God, forever! *We(exc)* acknowledge that you are completely wise, the powerful one, who is able to do all things forever! <It is so!/Amen!>”

Revelation 7:13-17

THEME: *One of the elders explained to John about the saints who are dressed in white robes.*

¹³ Then one of the elders asked me, “These *people* who are wearing white robes, *do you know* who they are, and where they come from?” ¹⁴ I answered him, “Sir, *I do not know. Surely you know who they are!*” He said to me, “These are the people <whom *others* have caused to suffer greatly/who *have been persecuted*>. *Because they believed that Jesus, the one who is like a sacrificial lamb, atoned for our sin when his blood flowed from his body when he died, it is as though* [MET] they have washed their robes and have made them *clean and white*. ¹⁵ Because of this, they are in front of God’s throne, and they serve him day and night in his *heavenly temple*. *God, the one who sits on the throne, will shelter/protect them* [MTY]. ¹⁶ *As a result, they will never again be hungry. They will never again be thirsty. The sun will never again <beat on/burn> them, nor will any heat scorch them.* ¹⁷ This is because the *one who is like a lamb* who is at the throne will *take care of them, just like a shepherd takes care of his sheep* [MET]. He will guide them *to the source of eternal life, just like a shepherd leads his sheep to springs of water, which enable the sheep to live* [MET]. *God will cause them to no longer be sad. It will be as if he were wiping away all tears from their eyes* [MTY].”

Revelation 8:1-5

THEME: *When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, it thundered, lightning flashed, and the earth shook.*

8 ¹ When *Jesus, the one who is like a lamb*, opened the seventh seal, there was no sound at all in heaven for <a very short time/about half an hour>. ² I saw the seven angels who stand in front of God. A trumpet was given {<God/An angel> gave a trumpet} to each one of them. ³ Another angel, who had a golden container for burning incense, came and stood at the altar. *He was given* {An angel gave to him} a large quantity of incense, in order that he might offer it, with the prayers of all God’s people, upon the golden altar that is in front of *God’s throne*. *Then he burned this incense on the altar*. ⁴ From the *pot* in the angel’s hand, the smoke of the incense, along with the prayers of God’s people, went up to God. ⁵ *In response, the angel took the golden incense burner and filled it with coals of fire from the altar. He threw the contents of the* [MTY] incense burner onto the earth. Thunder sounded and rumbled, lightning was flashing, and the earth shook.

Revelation 8:6-12

THEME: *The successive blasts by each of the first four trumpet angels resulted in great catastrophes on the earth and in the sky.*

⁶ The seven angels, *each* of which had *one of* the seven trumpets, prepared to blow them. ⁷ When the first angel blew his trumpet, hail and fire mixed with blood poured down onto the earth. *As a result, a third of everything on the surface of the land was burned up* {the fire burned up a third of everything on the surface of the land}. A third of the trees were also burned up {It also burned up a third of the trees}, and *a third of all the green grass was burned up*. ⁸ When the second angel blew his trumpet, something that was like a huge mountain burning with fire fell into the ocean. *As a result, a third of the ocean became red like* [MTY] *blood*, ⁹ a third of the living creatures in the ocean died, and a third of the ships *in the ocean* were destroyed. ¹⁰ When the third angel blew his trumpet, a huge star, which was burning like a torch, fell from the sky into a third of the rivers and into *a third of* the water springs. ¹¹ The name of the star is Bitterness. *As a result, the water in a third of the rivers and springs became bitter, and many people died from drinking the water because it had become bitter.* ¹² When the fourth angel blew his trumpet, *God struck the sun, the moon, and the stars, so that they lost a third of their light. The sun also did not shine during a third of the day, and the moon and stars did not shine during a third of the night.*

Revelation 8:13

THEME: *An eagle announced that rebellious people on earth would suffer greatly.*

¹³ As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying high in the sky, shouting in a loud voice, “Terrible things will happen to *rebellious* people who live on the earth as a result of *what will happen when* the three remaining angels blow their trumpets! They are about to blow them!”

Revelation 9:1-12

THEME: *When the fifth angel blew his trumpet, locusts with stings like scorpions came on the earth and attacked the rebellious people.*

9 ¹ The fifth angel blew his trumpet. Then I saw *an evil angel*. *He was like* a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. He was given {Someone gave him} the key to the shaft *that descended* <to the underworld/to the deep dark pit>. ² When he opened that shaft, smoke arose from it like smoke from a great burning furnace. The smoke prevented *anyone from seeing the light of the sun and the sky*. ³ Locusts came out of the smoke onto the earth. *They were given* {God gave them}

power to sting people, like scorpions sting people. ⁴ God told the locusts that they should not harm the grass of the earth, nor any plants, nor any tree. *God said that they should harm only those people who did not have a mark on the forehead to show that they belonged to God.* ⁵ God did not allow the locusts to kill those people. Instead, *he* allowed them to continue torturing people for five months. When they tortured people, the pain those people felt was like the pain a scorpion causes when it stings someone. ⁶ During the time *when the locusts torture rebellious people, the pain will be so bad that people will want to find a way to die, but they will not find [PRS] any way. They will long to die, but they will not be able to die [PRS].* ⁷ The locusts looked like horses that are ready for battle. They had on their heads what looked like golden crowns. Their faces were like the faces of people. ⁸ They had long hair like the long hair of women. Their teeth were strong, like lions' teeth. ⁹ They wore metal breastplates. *When they were flying, their wings made a noise like a roar when many horses pull chariots as they are rushing into battle.* ¹⁰ They had tails like tails of scorpions by which they stung people. Their power to harm people during those five months was in their tails. ¹¹ The king who ruled over them was the angel of the underworld. His name in the Hebrew language is Abaddon. In the Greek language it is Apollyon. *Both of those names mean 'Destroyer'.*

¹² That ended the first terrible event. *Be aware that two tragic events are still to come.*

Revelation 9:13-21

THEME: *When the sixth angel blew his trumpet, a third of the rebellious people on earth died. But the rest of the rebels did not repent of their false worship or of their evil practices.*

¹³ The sixth angel blew his trumpet. Then I heard a voice from the four corners of the golden altar that is in God's presence. ¹⁴ It was saying to the sixth angel, the one who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels whom I have bound at the great river Euphrates." ¹⁵ The four angels were released, those who had been {*He* released the four angels, whom *God* had} kept ready for that exact hour of that day, of that month, of that year. They were released {*He* released them} in order that they might enable their soldiers to kill a third of the rebellious people. ¹⁶ The number of the soldiers riding on horses that did that was two hundred million. I heard someone say how many there were. ¹⁷ In the vision I saw what the horses and the beings that rode them looked like. They wore breastplates that were red like fire, dusky blue like smoke, and yellow like sulfur. The heads of the horses were like the heads of lions. From their mouths came fire, smoke, and fumes of burning sulfur. ¹⁸ Those three things—the fire, the smoke, and the burning sulfur from the horses' mouths—killed a third of the rebellious people. ¹⁹ The power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails. Their tails have heads like snakes by which they harm people. ²⁰ The rest of the rebellious people, those who were not killed by these plagues of fire and smoke and burning sulfur, did not turn from their sinful behavior. *They did not stop worshipping the idols that they had made with their own hands. They did not stop worshipping demons and idols that were made of gold, of silver, of bronze, of stone, and of wood, even though they are idols that can neither see nor hear nor walk.* ²¹ They did not stop murdering people, or practicing sorcery, or acting in sexually immoral ways, or stealing things.

Revelation 10:1-7

THEME: *John saw a mighty angel coming down out of heaven and holding a small open scroll. When the angel shouted, the thunders responded, but a voice from heaven prohibited John from recording what they said. The angel affirmed that the living Creator of the universe would no longer delay in completing his purpose for his creation.*

10 ¹ In the vision I saw another mighty angel that was coming down out of heaven. A cloud surrounded him. There was a rainbow over his head. His face shone [SIM] like the sun. His legs looked like pillars of fire. ² He had in his hand a small scroll that was open. He set his right foot on the ocean and his left foot on the land. ³ He shouted something with a loud voice, a voice like the roar of a lion. When he shouted this, it thundered seven times, speaking words that I could understand. ⁴ When it thundered like that, I was about to write the words that I heard, but a voice from heaven said to me, "Keep secret what the thunder said! Do not write it down!" ⁵ Then the angel whom I had seen standing on the ocean and the land raised his right hand toward heaven, ⁶ and he asked the one who lives forever, the one who created heaven and everything that is in it, who created the earth and everything that is in it, and who created the ocean and everything that is in it, to affirm that what he said was true. *He said that he would surely no longer delay what he had planned.* ⁷ He said that when the time came for the seventh angel to blow his trumpet, he would complete God's secret plan, just like he announced long ago to his servants, the prophets.

Revelation 10:8-11

THEME: *The heavenly voice told John to take the open scroll from the angel and eat it. When he had eaten it, he was commanded by God to prophesy again about all people.*

⁸ The one whose voice I had heard from heaven spoke to me again. He said, "Go and take the open scroll from the hand of the angel who is standing on the ocean and on the land." ⁹ So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. In your mouth it will taste sweet like honey, but it will make your stomach bitter." ¹⁰ I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. In my mouth it tasted sweet like honey, but when I had eaten it, it made my stomach bitter. ¹¹ The one whose voice spoke from heaven said to me, "You must <prophesy again/proclaim again what I will reveal to you> about many people-groups, many nations, speakers of many languages [MTY], and many kings."

Revelation 11:1-14

THEME: *Christ told John to count his worshippers from the nations, and he appointed two witnesses to prophesy to the nations for a limited time. When they finished witnessing, the beast from the underworld killed them, causing the nations to enjoy temporary victory. God resurrected his witnesses, took them to heaven, and punished the nations. Survivors feared and acknowledged God as awesome.*

11 ¹ An angel gave to me a reed similar to a measuring stick. He said to me, “Christ says this: ‘Go to the temple where people worship God, measure it and the altar in it, and count the people who worship there. ² But do not measure the courtyard outside of the temple [DOU], because it has been given {God has given it} to the non-Jewish people. As a result, they will trample Jerusalem city for forty-two months. ³ I will appoint my two <witnesses/men who will tell others about me>. They will proclaim what I reveal to them for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. They will wear rough clothes made from goat’s hair to show that they are sad about people’s sin.’” ⁴ Those witnesses are the ones that are represented by the two olive trees and the two lampstands that are in the presence of the Lord who rules the earth [SYM]. ⁵ If enemies try to harm those witnesses, fire will come from the mouths of the witnesses and destroy them. If people want to harm them, the two witnesses will certainly kill them similarly. ⁶ Those witnesses will have authority over the sky in order to keep rain from falling during the time that they are proclaiming what God reveals to them. They also will have authority to cause water everywhere to become red like [MET] blood, and authority to send down to the earth all kinds of plagues. They will do this as often as they want to. ⁷ When they have finished proclaiming to people the message from God, the beast that comes up <from the underworld/from the deep dark pit> will attack them, overcome them, and will kill them. ⁸ The dead bodies of the two witnesses will lie in the street of the great city where their Lord was crucified, the city that is symbolically named Sodom or Egypt because its people are very evil, like the people who lived in Sodom and Egypt. ⁹ Individuals of many people-groups, tribes, language groups [MTY], and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days. But they will not allow anyone to bury their bodies. ¹⁰ When the rebellious people who live on the earth see that the witnesses are dead, they will rejoice and celebrate. They will send gifts to each other, because these two prophets had sent plagues which tormented the rebellious people on the earth. ¹¹ But after three and a half days, God will cause them to breathe again and live. They will stand up, and the people who see them will be terrified. ¹² The two witnesses will hear a loud voice from heaven saying to them: “Come up here!” Then they will go up into heaven in a cloud. Their enemies will see them as they ascend. ¹³ At that same time there will be a great earthquake, as a result of which a tenth of the buildings in [MTY] the city will collapse, and seven thousand people will die. The rest of the people will be afraid and acknowledge that the God who rules in heaven is awesome.

¹⁴ That will be the second terrible event. Be aware that the third tragic event will happen soon.

Revelation 11:15-19

THEME: *When the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, voices from heaven declared that the Lord God and his Messiah now govern all people, and the elders declared that the time had come for God’s final judgment. With the heavenly sanctuary open, lightning flashed, thunder reverberated, the earth shook, and large hail fell.*

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet. Voices in heaven shouted loudly, “Our Lord God and the Messiah whom he has appointed can now govern all the people in [MTY] the world, and they will continue to rule those people forever!” ¹⁶ The twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones in God’s presence <prostrated themselves/bowed down low> and worshipped him. ¹⁷ They said:

Lord God, you are the Almighty One!
 You are the one who exists now!
 You are the one who has always existed!
 We thank you that you have defeated with your power
 everyone who has rebelled against you,
 and you now rule over all the people in the world.

¹⁸ The unbelieving people of [MTY] the nations were angrily raging at you.
 As a result you have become very angry with them.
 You have decided that this is the appropriate time for you to judge all the dead people.
 You have also decided that it is the time for you to reward all your servants,
 both the prophets and the rest of your people who reverence you [MTY],
 whether they were considered socially significant/important or socially insignificant/unimportant.
 It is time for you to reward all of them!
 You have also decided it is the time for you to destroy the people who are destroying others on the earth.

¹⁹ Then God’s temple in heaven was opened {was open} and I saw in the temple the sacred box/chest that contains God’s covenant. Lightning was flashing, it was thundering and rumbling, the earth shook, and large hail fell from the sky.

Revelation 12:1-6

THEME: *When the royal woman gave birth to a kingly son, she fled to safety and care in a place in the wilderness that was prepared by God.*

12 ¹ Then something very unusual appeared in the sky. It was a woman, whose *appearance and* clothing were [MET] as bright as the sun. The moon was under her feet. On her head was a crown *that was made* of twelve stars. ² She was pregnant. Then, because she was about to give birth, she cried out because she was suffering pain. ³ Something else very unusual appeared in the sky. It was a huge red dragon. It had seven heads and ten horns. On each of its heads was a royal crown. ⁴ The dragon's tail dragged a third of the stars from the sky and threw them to the earth. The dragon set himself in front of the woman who was about to give birth, in order that he might eat her child as soon as it was born. ⁵ She gave birth to a son, who *is destined* to rule all the nations with *complete authority as if he was using* [MET] an iron rod [MET]. *God* snatched away her child and took him to *rule from* his throne. ⁶ The woman fled to a desert. She has a place there that God has prepared for her, in order that *the angels* may take care of her for a thousand, two hundred and sixty days.

Revelation 12:7-12

THEME: *There was a battle in heaven in which Michael and his angels fought the dragon. The dragon and his angels were thrown out of heaven to earth. A loud voice from heaven declared the victory and the sovereignty of God and lamented the tragic struggle coming to people on earth.*

⁷ There was a battle in heaven. Michael and the angels that he *commanded* fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back *against Michael and his angels*. ⁸ But the dragon did not win the battle, so *God* did not allow the dragon and his angels to stay in heaven any longer. ⁹ The huge dragon was thrown {*Michael and his angels* threw the huge dragon} *out of heaven*. The dragon is the ancient serpent, *the one* who is called the Devil and Satan. He is the one who deceives *people all over* the earth. He was thrown to the earth, along with all his angels. ¹⁰ Then I heard *someone* in heaven shout loudly, saying,

Now our God has saved *his people* by his power, and he rules *all people!*

Now his Messiah, who is the *supreme ruler whom God appointed,*

has authority to *rule all people*, because *our God* has thrown out of *heaven* the one who accuses our fellow believers!

The dragon is the one who accuses them day and night before our God,

saying that they have sinned and that God ought to punish them.

¹¹ *Our fellow believers* overcame him because they never stopped trusting

(OR, never stopped telling people about) *Jesus,*

and because they trusted in what the one who is like a lamb accomplished when his blood flowed when he died.

Even though those believers wanted to live,

they were willing to let people kill them for speaking truly about him.

¹² So, all you *angels* living [MTY] in heaven, rejoice!

But terrible things will happen to you *ungodly people who* [MTY] *live* on the earth and

on the ocean, because the devil has come down to you!

He *is* very angry because he knows that he has only a short time

during which he can harm people.

Revelation 12:13-18

THEME: *When the dragon pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child, he was thwarted, so he prepared to fight against her other offspring.*

¹³ When the dragon realized that he had been thrown {that *the angels* had thrown him} down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to a son. ¹⁴ But the woman was given two wings like the wings of a very large eagle, in order that she might fly to a desolate place. That is a place *that God* has prepared for her. There she was taken care of {*God's angels* took care of her} for three and one half years. The serpent, *that is, the dragon*, was not able to reach her there.

¹⁵ The serpent poured water like a river from his mouth in the direction of the woman, in order that the water might sweep her away. ¹⁶ But the ground helped the woman *by* opening up and swallowing the river that the dragon poured out from his mouth!

¹⁷ Then the dragon was very angry with the woman, so he went away to fight against *the people who are like* the rest of her descendants. They are the people who obey God's commandments and who tell other people about Jesus (OR, hold fast to what Jesus taught them). ¹⁸ The dragon stood on the ocean shore.

Revelation 13:1-10

THEME: *A beast rose from the ocean. It received power and authority from the dragon. All people worshipped it, that is, all people whose names were not recorded in the book of life worshipped the beast for forty-two months.*

13 ¹ I saw a beast that was coming up out of the ocean. It had ten horns and seven heads. On each of its horns there was a royal crown. On each of its heads there was a name that insulted God. ² The beast that I saw was like a leopard. But its feet were like the feet of a bear, and its mouth was like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave the beast power. From his own throne he also gave it authority to rule people [DOU]. ³ One of the heads of the beast had been wounded {The Lord had wounded one of the heads of the beast}, causing the beast to almost die. But its wound was healed. As a result, nearly all the people of the earth [HYP, MTY] marveled at the beast and became his disciples. ⁴ They worshipped the dragon, because he had given to the beast authority to rule people. They also worshipped the beast, saying, “<No one is as powerful as the beast!/Who is as powerful as the beast?> [RHQ] <No one would dare to fight against it!/Who would dare to fight against it?> [RHQ] ⁵ The beast was allowed {God allowed the beast} to speak [MTY] proudly and to insult God. It was also allowed {God also allowed it} to exercise authority over people for forty-two months. ⁶ It spoke [MTY] in order to insult God, in order to insult his name, in order to insult the place where he lives, and in order to insult the people who live there in heaven. ⁷ It was allowed {God allowed it} to fight against God’s people and to conquer them. It was allowed {God allowed it} to have authority to rule over every tribe, over every people-group, over speakers of every language [MTY], and over every nation. ⁸ Most of [HYP] the people living on earth worshipped it. They were people whose names were not written in a book by the one who is like a lamb, the one who had been killed. Since the beginning of the world he wrote in it the names of the people who will have eternal life. ⁹ Everyone who wants to understand [MTY] must listen carefully to this message from God: ¹⁰ If God has determined that some people will be captured by their enemies, they will be captured. If God has determined that some people will be killed with a sword, they will be killed with the sword. So God’s people must be steadfast, and be faithful to him.

Revelation 13:11-18

THEME: *Another beast appeared, having the same authority to rule people that the first beast had, and it caused people on earth to worship the first beast. People made an image of the first beast, and the beast had everyone killed who refused to worship the image. It caused all people to be marked with the name of the first beast. The number of the beast’s name is 666.*

¹¹ I saw another beast, which was coming up from the earth. It had two small horns on its head like a sheep has. But it spoke things to deceive people, like the dragon does. ¹² While the first beast watched, it used all the same authority to rule people that the first beast had. It forced the people who live on the earth [MTY, DOU] to worship the first beast, that is, the one who was healed of the wound that had caused it to almost die. ¹³ The second beast performed awesome miracles, even causing fire from the sky to fall to earth while people watched. ¹⁴ He performed miracles <on behalf of/with the authority of> the first beast. By doing that he deceived the unbelieving people on the earth so that they believed that they should worship the first beast. But this happened only because God allowed it to happen. The second beast told the people living on earth to make an image of the first beast, the one that people had killed with a sword and that then came back to life again. ¹⁵ The image of the first beast was allowed to breathe, in order that it might speak and in order that it might command that whoever refused to worship its image should be killed {that people should kill whoever refused to worship its image}. ¹⁶ The second beast required also that the first beast’s name be marked {its agents mark the first beast’s name} on the right hand or on the forehead of everyone, those of little social importance and of great social importance, the rich and the poor, free people and slaves. Everyone! ¹⁷ They did this in order that people could not buy anything or sell anything if they did not have the mark, which represents the name of the beast or the number of its name, on their foreheads. ¹⁸ You must think wisely to understand the meaning of the mark. Anyone who thinks wisely should calculate from the number of the beast what the man’s name is. That number is six hundred and sixty-six.

Revelation 14:1-5

THEME: *John saw the Lamb standing on Mt. Zion with 144,000 redeemed people, who were marked with God’s seal. They were singing a new song that only the redeemed could sing.*

14 ¹ But then I saw the one who is like a lamb standing on Zion Hill in Jerusalem. With him were 144,000 people. His name and his Father’s name had been written {He had written his name and his Father’s name} on their foreheads. ² I heard a sound from heaven, which was as loud [SIM] as the sound of a huge waterfall (OR, a great/wide river of rushing water) and which was as loud as [SIM] mighty thunder. The sound that I heard was like the sound that people make when they are playing their harps. ³ The 144,000 people were singing a new song while they stood in front of the throne, in front of the four living creatures, and in front of the elders. Only the 144,000 people, the ones who have been {whom the one who is like a lamb has} redeemed/bought from among the people on the earth, could learn that song. No one else could learn the song that they sang. ⁴ Those 144,000 are the people who are spiritually pure, like virgins are morally pure. They have not <defiled themselves/made themselves impure> [MET] by worshipping any false god. They are the ones who accompany Jesus, the one who is like a lamb, wherever he goes. They represent all those whom he has redeemed/bought for God from among the people of earth, in order that he might offer them to God and to himself. ⁵ Those people never lie when they speak [MTY], and they never act immorally.

Revelation 14:6-13

THEME: *An angel announced that God's judgment had destroyed the wicked cities symbolized as Babylon. Another angel declared individual judgment on worshippers of the beast, who symbolizes the head of this world power. The saints are called to remain steadfast.*

⁶ I saw another angel that was flying between the sky and heaven. He was bringing God's eternal good message to earth, in order that he might proclaim it to people who live on the earth. He will proclaim it to every nation, to every tribe, to speakers of every language [MTY], and to every people-group. ⁷ He said in a loud voice, "Reverence God and honor him, because it is now time for him to judge people! Worship God, because he is the one who created the heaven, the earth, the ocean, and the springs of water." ⁸ Another angel, the second one, came after him saying, "The very evil cities (OR, city) represented by Babylon are completely destroyed! God has punished their people because they have persuaded people of all the nations to forsake God, just like a prostitute [MET] persuades men to drink strong wine and as a result commit sexual immorality." ⁹ Another angel, the third one, came afterward, saying in a loud voice, "If people worship the beast and its image and allow its mark to be put {its agent to put its mark} on their foreheads or on their hands, ¹⁰ God will be angry with them and punish them very severely [MET]. They will be tormented {God will torment them} in burning sulfur in the presence of his holy angels and in the presence of the one who is like a lamb. ¹¹ The smoke from the fire that torments them will rise forever. They will be tormented {God will torment them} continually, day and night. That is what will happen to the people who worship the beast and its image and who allow its name to be marked on them {allow its agent to mark them with its name}." ¹² So God's people, those who obey what God commands and who trust in Jesus, must faithfully continue obeying and trusting him. ¹³ I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: God will now abundantly bless the people who have a close relationship with the Lord Jesus for the rest of their lives." God's Spirit says, "Yes, after they die they will no longer have to work hard. Instead, they will rest, and the record of the good deeds [MTY] that they have done will go with them (OR, God will reward them for the good deeds that they have done)."

Revelation 14:14-20

THEME: *One like the Son of Man sat on a cloud, holding a sharp sickle. An angel from the sanctuary commanded him to harvest the earth. Another angel was commanded to reap the fruit of the vine of the earth. He threw the fruit that he harvested into the winepress of God's anger. When the winepress was trodden, the flow was like a flood of blood on the earth.*

¹⁴ Then I was surprised to see a white cloud, and on the cloud someone was sitting who looked like the one who came from heaven. He was wearing a golden crown on his head. In his hand he held a sharp sickle. ¹⁵ Another angel came out of the temple in heaven. In a loud voice, speaking figuratively about gathering people for God to judge them, he said to the one who was sitting on the cloud, "The time has come to reap the grain on the earth, so with your sickle reap the grain, because the grain on the earth is ripe." ¹⁶ The one who was sitting on the cloud forcefully gathered together all the people on earth, as [MET] a farmer reaps grain with his sickle. ¹⁷ Another angel came out of the sanctuary in heaven. He also held a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ From the altar came another angel. He is the one who takes care of the fire of the altar. Also speaking figuratively about gathering the wicked people for God to judge and punish them, he said in a loud voice to the angel who held the sharp sickle, "With your sharp sickle cut off the clusters of grapes in the vineyards on the earth! Then gather the clusters of grapes together, because its grapes are ripe!" ¹⁹ So, just like a man would cut off with his sickle the clusters of grapes in his vineyard [MET], an angel forcefully gathered the wicked people on the earth. Then he threw them into the huge place where God will angrily punish them. ²⁰ The wicked people were trampled on {God's agent trod on the wicked people} in the winepress outside the city. The blood that came out from the winepress flowed in a stream so deep that it reached to the bridles of the horses, and extended <180 miles/300 kilometers>.

Revelation 15:1

THEME: *John saw in the sky a marvelous sign of the seven angels who were responsible to inflict the seven last plagues.*

15 ¹ Something else very unusual appeared in the sky. I saw seven angels, whose duty it was to punish (OR, inflict hardship upon) rebellious people with seven different plagues (OR, in seven different ways). God is so angry with rebellious people that this is the last time that he will punish them with the purpose of giving them an opportunity to turn away from their sinful behavior.

Revelation 15:2-4

THEME: *John saw those who had been victorious over the beast respond to God's judgment of rebellious people on earth by singing God's praise for his mighty deliverance and righteous judgment.*

² I saw what looked like an ocean that was made of glass and mixed with fire. And I saw the people who overcame the beast by not worshipping it or its image, or allowing its agent to mark them with the number that corresponds to the beast's name [PRS]. They were standing by the ocean that looked like it was made of glass. They had harps for praising God.

³ They were singing a song like God's servant Moses sang long ago. They sang like this to praise Jesus, the one who is like a lamb:

Lord God Almighty,
whatever you do is powerful and marvelous!

You always act righteously and truthfully.

You are king forever!

⁴ O Lord, you alone are holy!

People of [MTY] all nations will come and worship you,
because you show everyone that you have judged everyone righteously.

So, <everyone will fear you and honor you!/who would not fear and honor you?> [RHQ].

Revelation 15:5-8

THEME: John saw angels being given the seven bowls of judgment in the heavenly sanctuary, which became filled with the smoke of God's unapproachable glory.

⁵ After this I saw in heaven the temple that <corresponds to/was represented by> the tent that the Israelites pitched in the desert. That was the tent that contained the Ten Commandments. The temple door was opened {was open}. ⁶ Seven angels came out of the temple. Those angels were dressed in clean, white linen garments, and they wore gold bands around their chests. ⁷ One of the four living creatures gave each of the seven angels a golden bowl, filled with wine/liquid. That wine/liquid symbolized that God, who lives forever, would severely punish rebellious people. ⁸ The temple was filled with smoke that symbolized the presence of the glorious and all-powerful God. No one was able to enter the temple until the seven angels finished pouring out the seven plagues.

Revelation 16:1-9

THEME: Four angels emptied their judgment bowls.

16 ¹ In the vision I heard someone in the temple speak in a loud voice to the angels who had the seven bowls. He said, "Go from here and pour out on the earth the wine/liquid in [MTY] the seven bowls. This will show that God is angry with rebellious people and will punish them." ² So the first angel went and poured out on the earth the wine/liquid that was in [MTY] his bowl. As a result, horrible and painful sores broke out on his enemies who had allowed the beast's agents to mark them and who worshipped the image of the beast. ³ The second angel poured out on the ocean the wine/liquid that was in [MTY] his bowl. As a result, the water in the ocean stank like the blood of a person who has died. And [MTY] every living creature that was in the ocean died. ⁴ The third angel poured out on the rivers and springs the wine/liquid [MTY] that was in his bowl. As a result, the water in the rivers and springs turned into blood. ⁵ I heard the angel who has authority over the waters say to God, "O God, you exist and have always existed. You are the holy one. You judge people justly. ⁶ The rebellious people murdered your holy people and prophets. So you are just in punishing them by giving them blood to drink. This is what they deserve!" ⁷ Then I heard an angel respond from the altar [PRS], "Yes, Lord God, you who are almighty, you punish people rightly and justly!" ⁸ Then the fourth angel poured out on the sun the wine/liquid that was in [MTY] his bowl. He enabled the sun to scorch people with fiery heat. ⁹ Because people were severely burned by the intense heat {the intense heat severely burned people}, they said evil things about God [MTY], because he had the power to strike people with plagues like those. But they refused to turn away from their evil behavior and refused to honor him.

Revelation 16:10-16

THEME: Two more angels emptied their judgment bowls on the earth. Demons gathered armies to fight against God. But Jesus warned his people to watch faithfully for his imminent coming. The battle was ready to begin at Armageddon.

¹⁰ When the fifth angel poured out on the throne of the beast the wine/liquid that was in [MTY] his bowl, it became dark in the kingdom that the beast ruled. As a result, the beast and the people whom it ruled were biting their tongues because they were suffering intense pain. ¹¹ They insulted God who rules in heaven, because their sores were so painful. But they refused to stop doing the evil things that they were doing. ¹² The sixth angel poured out on the huge river Euphrates the wine/liquid that was in [MTY] his bowl. As a result, the water in the river was dried up so that the rulers from the eastern [MTY] countries could cross it with their armies [SYN]. ¹³ I saw evil spirits that looked like frogs. One came out of the mouth of the dragon, one from the mouth of the beast, and one from the mouth of the false prophet, who was actually the second beast. ¹⁴ Those spirits were demons who were able to perform miracles. They went out to the rulers of the whole world, in order to gather their armies [SYN] together to the battle that they will fight on the great day when Almighty God punishes his enemies [MTY]. ¹⁵⁻¹⁶ The evil spirits will gather the rulers at a place that is called in the Hebrew language Armageddon.

I heard the Lord Jesus say, "You must listen carefully to me: I am coming unexpectedly [SIM], like a thief. So, I will be happy with those who stay alert and keep on living righteously so that they will not be ashamed, just like [MET] a person keeps his clothes on so that he will not be ashamed when people see him walking around naked."

Revelation 16:17-21

THEME: *After the seventh angel emptied his bowl, God punished the very evil city symbolized by Babylon, and destroyed other cities, and great disasters followed.*

¹⁷ The seventh angel poured out into the air *the wine/liquid that was in* [MTY] his bowl. *As a result, someone said with a loud voice from the throne in the temple, “The time for God to punish rebellious people is about to be finished.”* ¹⁸ *When the angel emptied his bowl, lightning flashed, there were rumblings and thunder, and the earth shook. It shook more violently than it has ever shaken since people first lived on earth.* ¹⁹ *And as a result, the very evil city that is symbolized by Babylon split into three parts. God also destroyed cities in other nations. God did not forget that the people of* [MTY] *the very evil city symbolized by Babylon had sinned very much. So he caused the people with whom he was furiously angry* [MET] *to drink a cup of very poisonous wine/liquid that represented his punishment.* ²⁰ *Also as a result of the earthquake, every island disappeared, and the mountains became flat land.* ²¹ *Also as a result of the angel’s emptying his bowl, huge hailstones, each weighing about 100 pounds, fell from the sky onto the people. Then people insulted God because he had caused the terrible plague of destructive hail to fall on them.*

Revelation 17:1-2

THEME: *One of the seven angels offered to show John how God will punish the very evil city represented by a prostitute, with whom the rulers of people on earth have been seduced to act immorally and idolatrously.*

17 ¹ One of the seven angels, who had *one of the seven bowls*, came to me. He said to me, “Come *with me* and I will show you how *God* will punish the very evil city that is represented by [SYM] a prostitute, a city in which there are many *canals of water.* ² *It is as though the rulers of earth have acted immorally and idolatrously with the people of that city* [MET], and they *have persuaded people* who live on the earth to act immorally and idolatrously with them [MET], *just like a prostitute persuades men to drink the strong wine she gives them, resulting in their becoming drunk and committing immorality.*”

Revelation 17:3-6

THEME: *When the angel took John to a wilderness, he saw an immoral woman who was drunk with the blood of God’s people. The sight caused John to react with great bewilderment.*

³ Then, as *God’s Spirit controlled me*, the angel carried me away to a desolate area. There I saw a woman who was sitting on a red beast. The beast had *written names* all over itself. They were names that *insulted/spoke evil against* God. It had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ The woman *that I saw* was wearing purple and red *clothes*; and gold, precious stones, and pearls were fastened to her *clothes and her body*. She held in her hand a golden cup. The cup was full of a *liquid that represents* [SYM] the detestable/disgusting, idolatrous things and filthy immoral things that she *does.* ⁵ This name, that has a hidden/secret *meaning*, was written on her forehead: “*This woman is Babylon, the very evil city! She acts like the mother of the prostitutes on the earth. She teaches them to act immorally and to worship idols.*” ⁶ I saw that the woman had become drunk as a result of drinking the blood of God’s people, those who had told others about Jesus. When I saw her, I was very bewildered/perplexed.

Revelation 17:7-18

THEME: *The angel revealed the meaning of what John had seen, identifying as ruling entities both the beast which amazed people and his seven heads and ten horns, and the angel declared that they would be overcome by the Lamb and defeated. The angel identified the prostitute as representing the very evil city that dominates people, and he declared that it would be destroyed.*

⁷ The angel said to me, “*Do not be bewildered! Why are you bewildered?*” [RHQ] I will explain to you the hidden/secret meaning of the woman and of the beast on which she rides, the beast that has the seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸ The beast that you saw *lived* previously. Eventually God will destroy him, but now he is dead. He is *about to come up* from the underworld/from the deep dark pit. *When the beast who had previously lived, and who then had died, reappears, the people who live on the earth will be amazed. They are people whose names were not in the book in which are written the names of people who will have eternal life. The angels have been writing those names in a list* from the beginning of the world/from the time when the world began. ⁹ Those who *think wisely can understand* this: The seven heads of the beast on which the woman sits *symbolize the seven hills of the city that the woman represents.* They also *symbolize seven rulers.* ¹⁰ Five of those rulers have died. One is *still alive.* The seventh ruler has not yet come. When he comes, he must remain for *only a short time.* ¹¹ The beast that *lived* before and then was not *alive* will be the eighth ruler. He will be *evil like the seven rulers were, but God* will surely destroy him. ¹² The ten horns that you saw *represent ten rulers* who have not yet begun to rule. They will receive authority in order to rule *people* together with the beast for *only a short time, as if it were* [MET] for one hour. ¹³ Those rulers will all agree to do the same thing. *As a result they will give to the beast their right to rule people and their authority to rule people* [DOU]. ¹⁴ The rulers and the beast will fight against *Jesus, the one who is like a lamb.* He will defeat them, because he is Lord *who rules over all other lords* and the King *who rules over all other kings.* Those *people* who are with him and *helping him* are the ones whom God has chosen, and who keep *servicing him* faithfully. ¹⁵ Then the angel said to me, “The waters that you saw *in the city* where the prostitute sits represent *people-groups, multitudes of people, nations, and speakers of many languages* [MTY]. ¹⁶ The ten horns that you saw *represent*

rulers [SYM]. They and the beast will hate *the people in the city* [MTY] that the prostitute *represents*. As a result, they will *take away everything that is in the city, as if they were* [MET] leaving it naked. They will *destroy it as if* [MET] devouring flesh/meat, and they will burn it with fire. ¹⁷ They will do that because God has caused them to decide to do what he wants them to do. As a result, they will let the beast have their power to rule until what God has said is fulfilled {until *they* fulfill what God has said} [MTY]. ¹⁸ The prostitute that you saw *represents* the very evil city *whose leaders* [MTY] rule over the kings of the earth.”

Revelation 18:1-3

THEME: *A powerful angel descended from heaven and announced that the cities represented by Babylon were about to be completely destroyed because of their immorality and idolatry.*

18 ¹ After this I saw another angel, who had great authority, coming down from heaven. The earth became bright because he was shining so intensely/brightly. ² He shouted with a very loud voice, “*God is about to completely destroy* [DOU] all the very *evil cities* (OR, the very *evil city*) *that Babylon represents*. As a result, all *kinds of evil spirits* [DOU] will live there, and all *kinds of foul and detestable* [DOU] birds will live there. ³ *God will destroy those cities* because *their rulers have persuaded* the people of [MTY] all nations to act very immorally *and idolatrously with the people of* [MET] *those cities, just like* a prostitute persuades men to drink *strong wine* and then commit fornication with her. The rulers of the earth have also acted immorally *and idolatrously* with the people of [MTY] those cities. The merchants of the earth have become rich *because the people of those cities* strongly desired *and bought from the merchants* many <luxuries/expensive things>.”

Revelation 18:4-5

THEME: *John heard Jesus tell God’s people to flee out of those cities.*

⁴ I heard *Jesus* speak from heaven. He said, “My people, flee from *those cities*, in order that you do not sin as the people of *those cities do*. If you *sin as they do*, I will punish you as I will punish them. ⁵ *It is as though* their sins have been piled {have piled} up to heaven, and God remembers them [DOU], *so now he will punish them* [MTY].”

Revelation 18:6-8

THEME: *Jesus sentenced the cities represented by Babylon to destruction.*

⁶ *To the angels whom God assigned to punish those cities, Jesus said*, “Pay back/Punish the people of those cities to the same extent that they harmed *other people*. Cause them to suffer twice as much as *they caused other people to suffer* [DOU, MET]. ⁷ To the same extent that they have honored themselves and done the things that they wanted to do, to that extent torment them and cause them to grieve. *Do that because* in their minds they think, ‘We rule as queens! We are not widows, and we will never mourn *as widows do!*’ ⁸ So in one day terrible calamities/troubles will come upon them. *The people in those cities* will die, others will mourn for them, people will be hungry *because there will be no food*, and *their cities* will be burned up. The Lord God is able to punish those cities *like that*, because he is mighty.”

Revelation 18:9-19

THEME: *Earth’s kings, merchants, and maritime traders mourned the loss of those cities.*

⁹ “The kings of the earth who have acted immorally *with people of those cities* and have lived with the people of those cities, doing just what they wanted to do, will weep and mourn [DOU] for them when they see the smoke of the fire that is burning them. ¹⁰ They will stand far away *from those cities*, because they will be afraid *that they will suffer just like the people of those cities* are suffering. They will say, ‘Terrible things will happen to the awesome and mighty cities *represented by Babylon! God will punish them suddenly and swiftly* [MTY]!’ ¹¹ The merchants of the earth will weep and will mourn [DOU] *for those cities*, because no one will ever again buy the things that they have *to sell to the people in those cities*. ¹²⁻¹³ *They sell ornaments made of* gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls. They sell *expensive cloth made of* fine linen and silk, *expensive cloth that is dyed* purple and crimson. They sell all kinds of *rare wood*, all kinds of items *made of* ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble. They sell cinnamon, spice, perfume, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, and grain. They sell cattle, sheep, horses, and chariots. They even sell human beings [SYN, DOU] to become slaves. ¹⁴ *The merchants will say*, ‘The good things you people longed to have are gone! All your luxurious and splendid [DOU] *possessions have vanished!* They will be gone forever/You will never have them again [LIT]!’ ¹⁵ The merchants *who sold* these things and who had become rich by *supplying them* for those cities will stand far away, because they will be afraid *that they will suffer just like* the people of those cities are suffering. They will weep and mourn [DOU], ¹⁶ and they will say, ‘Terrible things [DOU] have happened to the awesome/great [MET] cities! *They were like queens* who dressed themselves in *clothes made of* [MTY] fine linen *cloth* and expensive cloth dyed purple and crimson, and who were adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls. ¹⁷ But suddenly and swiftly [MTY] *God has destroyed these expensive things.* Every ship captain, all people who travel by ship, all <sailors/those who work on ships>, and all others who earn their living *by traveling on* the ocean will stand far away *from those cities*. ¹⁸ When they see the smoke of the fire that is burning those cities, they will shout, ‘<No *other* cities have ever been so awesome!/Was there ever any other city that was as awesome as those cities?>’ [RHQ] ¹⁹ They will throw dust on their heads *to show that they are sad*, and they will shout, weep, and

mourn [DOU]. They will say, ‘Terrible things have happened to the awesome/great cities, the cities that made all people who own ships *that sail* on the ocean become rich by *carrying* their costly <things to sell/merchandise>! God has suddenly and swiftly destroyed [MTY] those cities!’”

Revelation 18:20-24

THEME: *All of God’s people who belong to heaven are called to rejoice because God has pronounced judgment on the cities represented by Babylon.*

²⁰ Then someone spoke from heaven saying, “You who live in heaven, rejoice over what has happened to *the cities represented* by Babylon! You who are God’s people, including you apostles, you <prophets/who speak messages that come directly from God>, rejoice, because God has justly punished the people of those cities because they acted evilly toward you!”

²¹ Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large stone for grinding grain, and he threw it into the ocean. Then he said, “O you people in [APO] the awesome/great cities *represented* by Babylon, your cities will be destroyed so that they will disappear just like that stone disappeared in the ocean! Your cities will be gone forever [LIT]! ²² In your cities there will never again be *anyone* playing harps, singing, playing flutes, and blowing trumpets. There will no longer be any <skilled workers/craftsmen> making things. There will never again be people grinding *grain* at [MTY] the mills. ²³ No lamplight will ever again shine. There will never again be the *happy* voices of a bridegroom and his bride. *God will destroy your cities* because your merchants were the most *deceiving* men in the world. You persuaded them to deceive *people* of [MTY] all nations. ²⁴ You are also *responsible for killing* [MTY] the prophets and *others* of God’s people. Indeed, you are the ones who are guilty for the deaths of all those who have been {whom *others* have} killed on the earth!”

Revelation 19:1-8

THEME: *After the destruction of Babylon, John heard a huge crowd praising God for saving his people and announcing the marriage of the one who is like a lamb.*

19 ¹ After these things I heard *what sounded* like a huge crowd in heaven. They were shouting *things like*,

“<Hallelujah!/Praise our God!>” “He has saved us!”

“He is glorious and mighty!”

² Praise him because he judges truly and justly!”

“He has punished the very evil cities that are like a prostitute,

because their people persuaded the other people of earth [MTY] to act immorally and idolatrously like they do.”

“Praise him because he has punished them for murdering his servants [MTY]!”

³ *The crowd* shouted a second time saying:

<Hallelujah!/Praise God!> The smoke of *the fire that is burning* the cities will rise forever!

⁴ The twenty-four elders and the four living *creatures* <prostrated themselves/knelt down> and worshipped God, who sits on the throne. Then they said, “*It is true!* <Hallelujah!/Praise God!>” ⁵ Someone spoke from the throne and said, “All you who are his servants, praise our God! All you who reverence him, *whether you are socially* significant or insignificant, praise him! *Everyone!*” ⁶ I heard something like the noise of a huge crowd of *people*, like the sound of a huge waterfall (OR, a great/wide river of rushing water), and like the sound of loud thunder. They were shouting:

<Hallelujah!/Praise God!> Because the Lord God, the Almighty One, reigns!

⁷ We should rejoice, we should be *extremely* glad, and we should honor him,

because it is now *time for Jesus*, the *one who is like a lamb*, to *be united*

permanently with his people, which will be like a man [MET] marrying *his bride*, and

because those who belong to him have prepared themselves *to be united with him*.

⁸ God has permitted them to *be completely pure, like a bride who* [MET] dresses in fine linen that is bright and clean.

Fine *bright and clean* linen represents the righteous acts of God’s people.

Revelation 19:9-10

THEME: *God will abundantly bless the people who have been invited to celebrate the marriage of the Lamb. Only God should be worshipped. All his servants are on an equal basis.*

⁹ Then the angel said to me, “Write *this: God will abundantly* bless the people who are {whom *he* has} invited to the feast that *celebrates Jesus*, the *one who is like a lamb, permanently uniting with his people, like someone* [MET] *marrying a wife*.” He also said to me: “These words that God *declares* are true!” ¹⁰ I *immediately* <prostrated myself/knelt down> at his feet in order to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not *worship me!* I am *just your*(sg) fellow servant and the fellow servant of your(sg) fellow believers who tell people about Jesus. God is the one whom you should worship, because it is the Spirit of God who gives people the power to tell others about Jesus (OR, *those who tell others about Jesus* are *truly* declaring *the words that the Spirit of God has given them*)!”

Revelation 19:11-16

THEME: John saw heaven open and saw the one whom he described as King of kings and Lord of lords mounted on a white horse.

¹¹ I saw heaven opened {open}, and I was surprised to see a white horse. Jesus, the one who was riding on the horse, is called 'Trustworthy and Genuine/True.' He judges *all people according to* what is right, and fights righteously *against his enemies*. ¹² His eyes *shone like* [MET] a flame of fire. There were many royal crowns on his head. A name had been written on him. Only he knows *the meaning of that name*. ¹³ The cloak he was wearing was drenched with blood. His name is *also* "◀The one who expresses what God is like/The Word of God▶." ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him. *They were riding on white horses. They were wearing clothes made of clean white linen.* ¹⁵ *The words that he speaks are like* [MTY] a sharp sword with which he will strike *the rebellious people of the nations*. He himself will rule them *powerfully, as though he had* [MET] an iron rod. He will crush *his enemies just like* [MET] a person crushes grapes in a winepress. *He will do this for God Almighty, who is furiously angry with them because of their sins.* ¹⁶ On his cloak close to his thigh a name had been written {he had written a name}, which is "King who rules over all other kings and Lord who rules over all other lords."

Revelation 19:17-21

THEME: An angel invited all flesh-eating birds to feast on the flesh of people who would be killed by the Rider on the white horse. When the beast and the false prophet gathered kings with their armies against the Rider and his army, the beast and the false prophet were thrown into the lake of fire. The sword of the Rider killed rebellious people, and the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

¹⁷ I saw an angel who was standing in *the light of* [MTY] the sun. He called loudly to all the *flesh-eating* birds flying high in the sky, "Come and gather for the great feast that God is providing for you!" ¹⁸ Come and eat the flesh of all *God's enemies who are dead*—the flesh of kings, of army commanders, of *people who fought* powerfully, of horses and of the *soldiers* who rode them, and the *flesh of all other kinds of people*, whether they were free or slave, *socially insignificant or significant. All kinds!* ¹⁹ Then I saw the beast and the kings of earth with their armies gathered together to fight against the rider on the horse, and against his army. ²⁰ The beast and the false prophet were captured {He captured the beast and the false prophet}. The false prophet is the one who had performed miracles in the beast's presence. By doing that he had deceived the people who had accepted the beast's mark on *their foreheads* and who worshipped its image. The beast and the false prophet were thrown {He threw the beast and the one who falsely said that he spoke messages that came directly from God} alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ²¹ The rider on the horse killed the rest of *their armies* by *his words, which were like* [MTY] a sword that extended from his mouth. All those birds gorged themselves on the flesh of *the people whom he had killed*.

Revelation 20:1-3

THEME: John saw an angel coming down from heaven. He seized, bound, and imprisoned the dragon for a thousand years.

20 ¹ I saw an angel coming down from heaven. He had the key to the deep dark pit, and he was carrying a large chain in his hand. ² He seized the dragon. That dragon is the ancient serpent, the devil, that is, Satan. The angel bound him with the chain. That chain could not be loosed {No one could loose that chain} for a thousand years. ³ The angel threw him into the deep dark pit. He shut *the door of the pit*, locked it, and sealed it to *prevent anyone from opening it*. He did that in order that Satan might no longer deceive *the people of the nations* [MTY], until those thousand years are ended. After that *time*, Satan must be released {God/God's angel must release Satan} for a short time *in order that he can do what God has planned*.

Revelation 20:4-6

THEME: John saw the thrones of the martyrs who lived again and had authority to judge people. Those martyrs are the first people whom God will cause to live again. They will reign with Christ during the thousand years.

⁴ I saw thrones on which people were sitting. *They were given* {God gave those people} *authority to judge other people*. I also saw the souls of *people* whose heads had been {whose heads others had} cut off because of *their telling people about Jesus and declaring God's message*. They were people who refused to worship the beast or its image, and who did not allow *the beast's agents* to put the beast's mark on them, either on their foreheads or on their hands. They became alive again, and they ruled with Christ *during those thousand years*. ⁵ They were the ones who lived again the first time *that God caused dead people to live again*. The rest of *the believers who had died* did not live again until after those thousand years. ⁶ ◀God will be pleased with/How happy will be▶ those who live again this first time. God will *consider* them holy. They will not die [PRS] a second time. Instead, they will be priests *who serve* God and Christ, and they will rule with *Christ* during those thousand years.

Revelation 20:7-15

THEME: *When Satan is released, he will deceive the nations in order to assemble them to fight against God and his people. God will send fire to burn up the rebellious nations. He will cause Satan to be thrown into the lake of fire for everlasting punishment.*

⁷When the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released {*God's angel will release Satan*} from his prison. ⁸He will go out to deceive the *rebellious* people in nations [IDM] all over the earth. *These are the nations that the prophet Ezekiel called Gog and Magog. Satan will gather them to fight against God's people. There will be so many of them fighting against God's people that no one will be able to count them* [SIM], just like *no one can count the grains of sand on the ocean shore*. ⁹They will march over the whole earth and will surround the camp of God's people in *Jerusalem*, the city that God loves. Then *God will send fire down from heaven, and it will burn them up*. ¹⁰The devil, who had deceived those people, will be thrown {*God's angel will throw the devil, who had deceived those people*} into the lake of burning sulfur. *This is the same lake into which both the beast and the false prophet had been thrown* {*he had thrown both the beast and the false prophet*}. *As a result, they will continually suffer severely forever.*

¹¹Then I saw a huge white throne on which God was sitting. He was so awesome that the earth and the sky disappeared from his presence completely; they were completely destroyed {*God completely destroyed them*}. ¹²I saw that the people who had died *but now lived again* were standing in front of the throne. *They included people of every social status! The books in which God records what people do were opened* {*God/God's angel opened the books in which God records what people do*}. Another book was opened {*He opened another book*}, which is called *the Book of Life, in which God has written the names of people who have eternal life*. God judged the people who had died *and now lived again* according to what they had done, just like *he had recorded it in the books*. ¹³*The people whose bodies were buried in the sea became alive again in order to stand before God's throne*. Everyone who had been buried on the land (OR, Every person who was waiting in the place where dead people stay) *became alive again, in order to stand before the throne*. God judged each one of them according to what each one had done. ¹⁴All the unbelievers [PRS/MTY] —those who had been in the place where they waited after they died—*were thrown into the burning lake*. The burning lake is *the place in which people die the second time*. ¹⁵The people whose names [MTY] are not in the book, the one *where God has written the names of people who have eternal life, were also thrown* {*God/God's angel*} threw them also} *into the lake of fire*.

Revelation 21:1-4

THEME: *John saw a new heaven, a new earth, and a New Jerusalem, where God will dwell permanently with his people.*

21 ¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and the oceans no longer existed. ²I saw God's holy city, which is the new *city of Jerusalem*. It was coming down out of heaven from God. *The city had been prepared and decorated* {*God had prepared and decorated the city*} as [SIM] a bride is decorated {*decorates herself*} *beautifully in order to marry her husband*. ³I heard a loud voice that spoke from the throne of God. It said, "Listen to this! Now God will live with people. He will live *right in the midst of them* [DOU]! They will be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. ⁴*As a result, he will cause them to no longer be sad. It will be as though he will* [MTY] wipe every tear from their eyes. *None of them will ever again die or mourn or cry* [DOU] or suffer pain, because the former things *that make us sad* will have passed away."

Revelation 21:5-8

THEME: *God declares that he has made everything new and that everything has been accomplished. He declares himself to be the beginning and the end, and so he will provide abundant eternal life to all who seek him, but punishment in the lake of fire will be the lot of all the wicked.*

⁵Then God, who sits on the throne, said, "Listen to this! I am *now making everything new!*" He said to me: "Write these things *that I have told you*, because you can trust *that I will certainly cause them to happen*." ⁶He said to me, "I have completed *all these things!* I am the one who began all things [MET] and the one who will cause all things to end [MET]. To everyone who is *spiritually thirsty* [MET], I will <freely give/give as a free gift> water from the spring *that causes people to live forever*. ⁷I will give this to every person who is victorious over *the evil powers* (OR, *over Satan*). I will be their God, and they will be my children. ⁸But those who are cowardly, those who do not believe *in me*, those *who do* detestable things, those who are murderers, those who sin sexually, those who commit sorcery, those who worship idols, and every liar, will *all suffer* in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. *Anyone who suffers in that lake will be dying the second time.*"

Revelation 21:9

THEME: *One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls offered to show to John the Bride of the Lamb.*

⁹One of the seven angels who had one of the seven bowls that had been full of *the wine/liquid causing* [MTY] the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come *with me* and I will show you *the people who have permanently united with Christ, the one who is like a lamb!* They will be *like* [MET] a bride for him."

Revelation 21:10-14

THEME: *An angel showed John the city of God, the New Jerusalem, that was coming down out of heaven from God, shining with his glory, having a huge wall with twelve gates and twelve huge foundation stones.*

¹⁰ Then, while *God's Spirit controlled me*, the angel took/carried me to the top of a very high mountain. He showed me *God's holy city, the New Jerusalem*. It was coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It was shining with his glory. The city was shining like a very precious jasper stone *shines, and* it was clear like crystal. ¹² *Around the city* was a very high wall. The wall had twelve gates. An angel was at each gate. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written {*God had written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel*} over the gates. *Each gate had the name of one tribe.* ¹³ Three gates were on the east *side*, three gates were on the north *side*, three gates were on the south *side*, and three gates were on the west *side*. ¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundation stones. On each foundation stone was the name of one of the twelve apostles of *Jesus, the one who is like a lamb*.

Revelation 21:15-17

THEME: *The angel guide measured the city and its wall.*

¹⁵ The angel who was speaking to me carried a golden measuring rod, in order to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶ The city was square *in shape*; it was as long as it was wide. After the angel measured the city with his rod, *he reported that it was* <1500 miles/2400 kilometers> long, and that its width and height were each the same as *its length*. ¹⁷ He measured its wall *and reported that it was* <216 feet/70 meters> thick (OR, *high*). The angel used the measure that people normally use.

Revelation 21:18-27

THEME: *John described the composition of the city, its wall, its foundations, its gates, and its street, emphasizing the extreme value of each part.*

¹⁸ The city wall was made of *something like the green stone that we call jasper*. The city itself was made of *something like pure gold that looked like clear glass*. ¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city were beautifully decorated with *wonderful stones that are like precious stones on earth*. The first foundation stone was a *crystalline stone like jasper*, the second foundation stone was a *blue stone like sapphire*, the third foundation stone was a *green stone like agate*, the fourth foundation stone was a *green stone like emerald*, ²⁰ the fifth foundation stone was a *brown and white layered stone like sardonyx*, the sixth foundation stone was a *red stone like carnelian*, the seventh foundation stone was a *yellow stone like chrysolite*, the eighth foundation stone was a *green stone like beryl*, the ninth foundation stone was a *yellow stone like topaz*, the tenth foundation stone was a *green stone like chrysoprase*, the eleventh foundation stone was a *blue stone like hyacinth*, the twelfth foundation stone was a *purple stone like amethyst*. ²¹ The twelve gates of the city were *something like huge pearls*. Each gate was like *it was* a single pearl. The ground of the main plaza of the city (OR, *The streets of the city*) appeared to be pure gold that looked like clear glass.

²² There was no temple in the city. The Lord God Almighty *himself*, and the *one who is like a lamb*, are *there, so there was no need for* [MET] a temple. ²³ The city will not need the sun or the moon to light the city, because the glory of God will light the city, and *Jesus, the one who is like a lamb*, will also be its light. ²⁴ The people of [MTY] the nations will live with the light of the city *shining upon them*. And the kings of the earth will bring their wealth into the city *to honor God and the one who is like a lamb*. ²⁵ The gates of the city will not be shut {No one will shut the gates of the city} *at the end of the day as they usually are shut*, because there will be no night there. ²⁶ The *people of the world* will also bring their wealth into the city to honor *God and the one who is like a lamb*. ²⁷ No one who is morally impure, no one who does deeds that *God considers detestable*, no one who tells lies, will ever enter that city. Only those people whose names are written in the book of the *one who is like a lamb* {whose names the *one who is like a lamb* has written in his book}, *the names of people who have eternal life*, will be there.

Revelation 22:1-5

THEME: *God will supply abundant life in the city, his servants will worship him face to face, no one will be there whom God would curse, and his servants will reign forever and ever.*

22 ¹ The angel showed me the river of water *that causes people who drink from it to live forever*. The water was sparkling and clear like crystal. The river was flowing out from the throne where God and the *one who is like a lamb* were sitting. ² It flowed down through the middle of the *main street* of the city. On each side of the river were trees *having fruit that causes people who eat it to live forever*. *The trees* bear twelve crops (OR, *twelve kinds*) of fruit; *they* produce one crop each month. The *people of the nations* [MTY] use the leaves of the trees as *medicine* in order that they may be strengthened. ³ There will never be *any one or anything there that God will curse*. The throne of God and of the *one who is like a lamb* will be in the city. And his servants will worship him there. ⁴ They will see him face to face, and his name will be written {*he will write his name*} on their foreheads. ⁵ There will never again be night. *God's servants* will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will shine his light upon them. And they will rule forever.

Revelation 22:6-7

THEME: *God verified the revelation of his message to his servants in which he showed them what must happen soon.*

⁶The angel said to me: “These words that *God has revealed to you* are true, and he will certainly fulfill them. The Lord God who *inspires* the prophets/tells the prophets what to say sent his angel to show the people who serve him the events that must happen soon.” ⁷*Jesus says to all his people*, “Listen to this! I am coming soon; *God will abundantly bless* everyone who obeys the message that *has been written* in this book.”

Revelation 22:8-11

THEME: *John attested that he has himself heard and seen all these things. He was told to tell others the revelation because its fulfillment was near, and everyone should be ready.*

⁸I, John, am the one who heard and saw *in a vision* these things *that I have written down*. When I had heard and seen *them*, I immediately knelt down at the feet of the angel who was showing them to me, in order to worship him. ⁹But he said to me, “Do not *worship me!* I am *just* your fellow servant! I am also the fellow servant of your fellow believers who are *the prophets/the ones who tell messages that come directly from God*», and I am a fellow servant of those who obey the message in this book. *Instead*, worship God!” ¹⁰He also said to me, “Do not keep secret the message about what *God has foretold* in this book, because it is almost time [MTY] for him to *fulfill this message*. ¹¹*Since that time is near*, if those who act in an evil manner *want to continue to act that way* [IRO], *that is up to them*. *God will soon pay them back/punish them*» for that. If those who are vile *want to continue to be vile* [IRO], *that is up to them*. *God will soon pay them back/punish them*» for that. Those who are *acting* righteously should continue to act righteously. Those who are holy should continue to be holy.”

Revelation 22:12-16

THEME: *Jesus announced that he had sent his angel to bear witness to the congregations about all that John had seen. He authoritatively identified himself as the Descendant of King David and as the Messianic Morning Star.*

¹²*Jesus says to all people*: “Listen! I am coming soon! And I will pay back and *punish or reward* everyone according to what each one has done. ¹³I am the one who began all things [MET] and the one who will cause all things to end [MET]. I am before *all things* and I am at the end of *all things* [DOU]. ¹⁴*God is very pleased with the people who wash their robes, making themselves spiritually clean* [MET], because they will be able to *eat the fruit of* [MTY] the tree *that enables people to live forever*, and because they will be able to enter the gates into the *holy city*. ¹⁵*Outside are people who are unholy. They include* people who practice sorcery, people who sin sexually, murderers, idol worshippers, and all people who enjoy telling lies and are continual liars. *They can never enter that city*.”

¹⁶“I, Jesus, sent my angel in order that he might say to you who are in the congregations *that all these things are true*. I am the descendant of *King David whom the prophets promised would come* [MET]. I am the *one who is like* the bright morning star [MET], the one *that Moses promised would come*.”

Revelation 22:17

THEME: *God’s Spirit and the Bride invite all who desire to drink the living water to come and drink, and they invite all who hear to extend the invitation to others.*

¹⁷*God’s Spirit and his people, who are like* [MET] the bride of *Christ*, say to each one who desires to believe, “Come!” Whoever hears *this* should also say to each one who desires to believe, “Come!” The *spiritually thirsty people should come* [MET]! Everyone who desires the water *that enables people to live forever* should take it as a free gift!

Revelation 22:18-19

THEME: *Jesus warned about what would happen to anyone who adds to the message of the book or who takes away any message of its revelation.*

¹⁸“I, Jesus, *solemnly warn* everyone who hears the message about what *I have foretold* in this book: If any one adds anything to this message, God will cause him to experience the plagues that are {that *I have*} described in this book. ¹⁹If any one takes away any of the message about what *I have foretold* in this book, God will take away that person’s right to *eat fruit from* [MTY] the tree *that enables people to live forever*. He *will also take away* that person’s right to *enter* God’s city. *Both these things* are described {*I have described both these things*} in this book.”

Revelation 22:20

THEME: *Jesus declares that he is certainly coming soon.*

²⁰*Jesus*, who says that *all these things are true*, says, “Certainly I am coming soon!” *I, John, reply*, “*May it be so!/Amen!*» Lord Jesus, come!”

Revelation 22:21

THEME: John closes with a prayer that Jesus will continue to bless all God's people.

²¹ I pray that our Lord Jesus will continue to act kindly to all of you who are God's people.
<Amen!/May it be so!>